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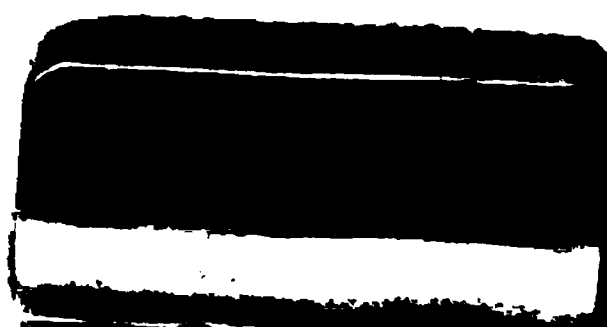
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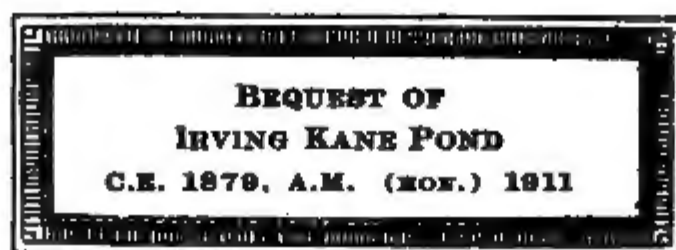
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*By* William Agnew Patton**

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"IL FORO ITALICO." PALERMO. MONTE PELLEGRINO

# PICTURESQUE SICILY

BY

WILLIAM AGNEW PATON

AUTHOR OF

"DOWN THE ISLANDS: A VOYAGE TO THE CARIBBEES" ETC.

"Multa mihi videntur esse de Sicilia  
disputata, vetustate, utilitate dicenda."

CICERO

"Italy without Sicily leaves no image  
in the soul—Sicily is the key to all."

GOETHE

ILLUSTRATED

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TO  
A. W. P.

THE COMPANION OF MY SICILIAN JOURNEY

W. A. P.



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## P R E F A C E

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SICILY is little known to the world of to-day; few travellers visit the island; of American books on modern Sicily there are none, of English books there is a plentiful lack; and, even in these days of magazines and newspapers, but little information concerning the mysterious country finds its way into the public prints of Europe or the United States. Nevertheless, Sicily presents to historians and archæologists a field the more tempting that it has been so little tilled, and a new world to travellers who delight in the romantic and the picturesque. The discovery in all parts of the island of a great number of Greek temples, theatres, and other edifices must excite the interest of antiquarians, while the mere sight of these grand ruins challenges the admiration of all beholders. To me these relics of classic times were revelations of a forgotten—indeed an almost unknown—era in the history of a highly civilized and art-loving people. With great surprise, I learned that there are more ruins of Greek temples in the island of Sicily than are to be found in the Peloponnesus, or in all Greece besides.

Not only in examples of Greek architecture, but also in the more or less perfect architectural relics of

other nations that at one time or another have held dominion in the island, is Sicily surprisingly rich. Nowhere else in Europe (within the limits of so small a territory) are there to be seen so many well-preserved specimens of the work of the master builders of ancient and mediæval times. It has been well said that "Sicily is the Archæological Museum of Europe"; for in Sicily are to be seen the caves of the cliff-dwellers; fragments of cyclopean structures reared by prehistoric builders; foundations of walls laid by Phœnicians and Carthaginians; temples, theatres, and fortresses of Greek construction; bridges, aqueducts, and amphitheatres erected by Roman engineers; remains of edifices built by Byzantine architects; mosques and towers of Saracenic origin; while of Norman churches, castles, palaces, who can tell the number or describe their magnificence?

When the Mediterranean was the only ocean whose expanse had been explored by civilized people, the lands washed by its waves composed the whole of the known world of antiquity, and Trinacria was the very centre of ancient civilization. The nations that have dwelt around the Mediterranean waged almost incessant war for the possession of the island, and these wars were of paramount importance to mankind. For more than fifteen hundred years it was the battlefield upon which men of European blood contended with men of Asiatic blood for the dominion of the world. In Sicily, no less than in old Greece, was waged the war of civilization against barbarism, of philosophy against mysticism, of science against astrology; and it is no exaggeration to say that upon the result of battles fought in Sicily, or on

the sea near her coast, oftentimes have hung the fate and future history of Europe.

Sicily has been the battle-ground not only of race against race and nation against nation, but of creed against creed. On Sicilian soil innumerable battles were fought between Shemitic men who bowed down to Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch, and Aryans who worshipped Jove and all his starry host—Phœnicians against Greeks, Carthaginians against Romans. Then came the Moslems, followers of Mohammed, to fight against Greeks who called themselves “the servants of the Nazarene”; and, later, Saracens warred against Normans.

In all these wars Europeans battled with Asiatics, or Africans of Asiatic ancestry; the “men of the West” against the “men of the East”; and oftentimes these Sicilian campaigns, carried on in and for the possession of Sicily, determined the course of history far beyond the limits of the island battle-ground. As, for instance, on the day commonly said to be the Day of Salamis, when the men of old Greece saved their country from the invading Persians, the Greeks of Sicily won the battle of Himera, and so not only delivered their native land from the yoke of the Carthaginians, but turned back a tide of conquest that threatened to orientalize Europe.

In Sicily were fought many of the battles of the Punic Wars. Pyrrhus of Epirus, and after him Belisarius, played their short but brilliant parts on Sicilian soil. In Sicily the Moslems temporarily established the dominion of the Khalifs of Africa. In Sicily the Normans won for themselves a kingdom, and established a government which, for a time, was the most

liberal, the most powerful, the richest and most magnificent of the governments of Europe.

The glory of the Normans soon departed, and Sicily became the football of popes, emperors, and kings. Suabians, Angevins, Aragonese, Catalans, Castilians, Savoyards, Spaniards, Austrians—all these, in turn, holding dominion in the island—ruled despotically, unwisely, unjustly. At last—blackest of all the curses that have fallen upon ill-fated Sicily—the Bourbons set up their despotism, which Gladstone described as “the negation of God erected into the form of a government,” the government of the three F’s (as King Ferdinand called it), “Feste, Farine, Furche,” that is to say, government by feast-days, free distribution of grain, and the gallows for all who complained too loudly in their misery and hopelessness.

Not until 1860 did Garibaldi break the yoke of their bondage, and then, for the first time in many centuries, the Sicilians were free to work out their social and political salvation.

Thus for ages the possession of Sicily was disputed by the leading political powers of the world, because its central position made it a strategic point of first importance, and its possessors held the key to “The Midland Ocean.”

Constantly in danger of foreign invasion, Sicily was “armed to the water’s edge,” and when threatened from without, the Siceliots united for the time being to repulse the fleets and armies of their would-be conquerors. But having defeated the common enemy, they fell to fighting among themselves, so that the island was seldom at peace for long. Most disastrous of all their civil conflicts was that into which the

Siceliots were drawn when the scene of the wars between Athens and Sparta was transferred from old to new Greece, for in Sicily, not in Hellas, was waged the decisive battle of the Peloponnesian wars. Under the walls of Syracuse, not in Attica, nor yet in Lacedæmon, the momentous conflict between Dorian and Ionian Greeks, which had lasted for centuries, was fought out to the end. The great harbor of Syracuse was the scene of that tremendous naval combat so marvellously described by Thucydides in the grandest of all the passages in his prose epic. When in 415 B.C., the combined fleets of Sparta and her Siceliot allies prevented the escape to the open sea of the Athenian fleet commanded by Nicias, Athens paid the merited penalty for her unreflecting rashness in deserting the democratical principles of Pericles. The Athenians had chosen to follow Alcibiades, who had infected them with aristocratical ideas, "land hunger," and an unholy lust for foreign conquest, and judgment fell upon the city which Pericles had enfranchised and raised to the supreme height of her power and magnificence. The foundations of the Attic commonwealth were shaken, the glory departed from Athens; she never recovered her former greatness, and Sparta, Thebes, Macedon, in turn, dominated the Greek world.

The authentic, as distinguished from the legendary and fabulous, history of Sicily opens with an account of the founding, by Ionian Greeks, of Naxos, at the foot of Ætna, in 736 B.C.; but the dawn of Sicilian civilization preceded the arrival of the invading Hellenes. Nevertheless, the Sicilians owed their more perfect enlightenment to the new masters of the isl-

and, the world-compelling, civilizing men of Hellas. While the Greek colonists—the Siceliots—cherished an intellectual connection with their kin beyond the sea, they gave birth to independent native tendencies, discovered improved forms of art, employed new methods of thought, fostered new ideas, and contributed more than all the other colonies of Hellas to the inestimable store of Panhellenic learning. First and greatest of all Sicilian poets, Stesichorus of Himera, the contemporary of Arion, reviving popular interest in the Homeric hymns, charmed the Greek world with lyric song, developed choral poetry, adapting it for public representations accompanied by the cither and dances. Ibycus, born at Rhegium, fired the hearts of youths and maidens with the passion and realism of his love songs; Aristoxenus of Selinus invented iambic verse and wrote “The Megarean Comedies,” which, after many representations in Syracuse, won the applause of Athenian audiences. Sophron of Syracuse portrayed in his mimes the life and character of the Sicilians, and by the originality of his compositions greatly influenced the poets of Athens, and, later, of Rome. The names of many other Sicilian singers might here be mentioned, but it must suffice to recall the fact that when in old Greece the Muses became silent, as if affrighted by the approaching catastrophe—the subjugation of ancient Hellas by the young giant, Rome—in new Greece, Theocritus, the master of all pastoral poets, sang clearly and sweetly by the pleasant waters of the Anapus, awakening strains that entranced the spirit of Virgil, and even after the lapse of twenty-two centuries found an echo in the songs of Robert Burns.

While the Siceliots were quick to recognize and reward the genius of native singers, they welcomed poets, and especially dramatists, from foreign lands. Cinæthus of Chios, the countryman of Homer, rendered the Homeric epos familiar to Syracusan scholars; Arion, the Lesbian, lived at ease at the court of Gelon; Epicharmus of Cos made his home at the palace of Hieron, who also invited Pindar, Æschylus, Simonides, and Bacchylides to visit him in Syracuse. Corax, "the founder of Sicilian oratory, the first Greek who applied the principles of science to the art of speech," \* was the cherished friend of this same Hieron, who gathered around him the most eminent sages, poets, and artists of his time. Under Corax, Tisias studied oratory, and he in turn instructed Gorgias in the art of public speaking, an art which was cultivated at Acragas, by Empedocles, whom Aristotle called "the founder of rhetoric." Antiochus of Syracuse, Timæus of Tauromenion, Diodorus Siculus of Agira, wrote histories that entitled them to honors only less distinguished than those paid to Herodotus and Thucydides. In philosophy, practical statesmanship, law, no less than in poetry, oratory, and history, Sicilian scholars won high renown. In Sicily, the plastic and tectonic arts flourished from an early age; Sicilian architects reared the superb temples of Acragas, Selinus, and Syracuse, and the magnificence of those cities at least rivalled, if it did not eclipse, the glory of all other Greek cities, with the exception of Athens, and possibly of Corinth. Greek literature was enriched by the contributions of Siceliot men of let-

\* ERNST CURTIUS. *History of Greece.*

ters, and in later days Roman poets and dramatists drew inspiration from the works of Sicilian masters. Virgil—to mention him only—the greatest of all Latin poets, frankly admits his indebtedness to the Sicilian muse :

“Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu,  
Nostra, nec erubuit silvas habitare, Thalia.”

All the races and nations that have dwelt in Sicily have left relics and monuments of their occupancy ; but of all nations, two—the Greeks and the Normans—have most distinctly and most enduringly commemorated their conquests of the island. Without an intimate and correct knowledge of the history of the Siceliot, no historian can hope to understand the history of Greece and Rome, and he who ignores the chronicles of the Normans of Sicily can never comprehend, in its full significance, the wonderful story of the “Making of Modern Europe.”

The story of the Norman conquest of Sicily, as told, in Italian, by Amari, is worthy the study of all students of arts and letters ; for the day of modern Italian literature dawned in Sicily at the court of its Norman kings, who, discarding Greek, Latin, and Arabic, and in time disusing the speech of their ancestors, as well as the Provençal, made “La Lingua Siciliana” (the vernacular of Sicily) popular and fashionable. Long before a word of Tuscan speech became familiar to Sicilian tongues and ears the scholars who graced the court of Frederick II. had established their claim “to be looked upon as the founders of that Italian language which first assumed distinct-

ive shape" at the Sicilian court of the grandson of Roger the Norman and Frederick Barbarossa. While the Tuscans were still writing in Provençal, Sicilian poets were singing in the "vulgari eloquio," as Dante calls the speech of the common people, and proclaiming the advent of a new and glorious era of Italian letters. Long before Dante was born in Florence, in the year 1265, the first composition in "La Nuova Lingua Italiana" was written, and "Il Contrasto d'Amore," attributed to Ciullo d'Alcamo, was imitated by a host of his disciples, Enzo, Manfredi, Guido delle Colonne, Pier delle Vigne, among others, the last named the favorite minister, secretary, and counsellor of the great emperor Frederick II.

These Sicilian canzone—lyric songs—were the earliest syllables of a literature whose glory culminated in the "Divine Comedy" of Dante. It is true the Sicilian dialect was superseded by the nobler Tuscan speech, but the fact remains that at Palermo, not at Florence, Italian literature had its beginning. Dante admits this, and Petrarch writes, "The Sicilians were before us." As in the days of Virgil Roman poets had sought instruction from Sicilian masters, so again, in the days of Dante, Italian singers turned once more for inspiration to the Sicilian muse.

Although in this volume I have in the main confined myself to a description of the picturesque island as it is to-day, I have striven to impress my readers, as I myself was impressed at all stages of our Sicilian journey, with the historical interest which heightens the effect of every Sicilian landscape and adds a charm to the aspect of every city, town, and hamlet in the island. No traveller in this enchanting island can

remain insensible to the poetical interest that clings to and adorns so many places and things Sicilian. If he be possessed of even a small amount of knowledge of classical folk-lore, he will not fail to call to mind the romantic tales of Greek and Roman mythology—tales which he, perhaps, learned by heart from his school-books, and which, lingering delightfully in his memory, enhance his enjoyment of many a charming landscape, and enrich with mysterious light and color the view of ruined cities and crumbling temples of the ancient gods.

“To know Europe, one must know Italy.” To know Italy, one must be well versed in Sicilian history, archæology, art, and literature; for, as Goethe declares, “Italy without Sicily leaves no image in the soul; Sicily is the key to all.”

WILLIAM AGNEW PATON.

# CONTENTS

---

## I

### SICILY AT LAST

From Naples to Palermo—Capri to Pellegrino—A Storm from the *Æneid*—The *Æolian Islands*—*Post Nubila Phæbus*—Snow Peaks and Orange Groves—"Il Conco d' Oro"—"Palermo the Superb"—"The Land of Brigands, Earthquakes, and Social Disorders" . . . . . Page 1

## II

### THE CAPITAL OF SICILY

"Knowest Thou the Land?"—"The Pearl of the Mediterranean"—A Transformed Palace—A Picturesque Wreck—"The Bells, Bells, Bells"—Street Cries—The Wonderful Palermo Carts—A Picture-gallery on Wheels—A Land of a "Strange, Eventful History" . . . . . 9

## III

### MONTE PELLEGRINO

Italian Cavalry—The Soldiers of Hamilcar Barca—"La Strada di Montagna"—Satyrs and Pan-pipes—May-flowers in December—An Ancient Monastery—The Shrine of Santa Rosalia—A Saintly Daughter of Kings—The Vision of Goethe—View from the Summit of Pellegrino . . . 19

## IV

## THE HEART OF PALERMO

- "I Quattro Canti"—"Il Corso"—Via Macqueda—Ancient City Gates—The Four Quarters of the City—Baroque Architecture—Saracenic-Norman Churches—San Cataldo—La Martorana . . . . . Page 28

## V

## LA CAPPELLA PALATINA

- La Porta Nuova—The Royal Palace—King Roger's Chapel—Jewelled Walls—La Stanza di Ruggiero—Tapestries in Stone . . . . . 39

## VI

## MONREALE

- King William the Good—The Cathedral of Santa Maria Nuova—The Basilica on Mount Royal—The Benedictine Cloisters—Treasures of Architecture—Norman Splendor . 48

## VII

## IL DUOMO DI PALERMO

- Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta—"Walter of the Mill"—Tombs of Norman Kings—King Roger II.—Emperor Henry VI.—Constance, "The Last of the d'Hautevilles"—Emperor Frederick II., "The Wonder of the World". 59

## VIII

## TWO HISTORIC CHURCHES

- San Giovanni degli Eremiti—La Chiesa dei Vespri—Campo di Santo Spirito—The War of the Sicilian Vespers in Pantomime—Giovanni di Procida . . . . . 67

IX

SARACENIC QUARTERS OF PALERMO

Rione Castellamare—Rione Palazzo Reale—The Slums of Palermo—"Rag Fair"—Albergheria—A Victim of the Triple Alliance . . . . . Page 76

X

IN PALERMO

The Genius of Palermo—La Piazza della Rivoluzione—La Chiesa della Gangia—Volfango Goethe—La Villa Giulia—L'Orto Botanico—La Via Borgo—Le Belle Donne—Interesting Sights—"The Sailors' Rest"—La Cala—Il Foro Italico . . . . . 85

XI

SUNNY WINTER DAYS

La Villa Belmonte—Mondello—La Villa Scalea—San Martino—A Noble Charity—Ancient Trees . . . . . 96

XII

AT THE OPERA

A Study of Sicilian Character—The Rival Claques—Initiating a New Opera Troupe—"Carmen"—"Toreador Attento"—A Musical "Sicilian Vespers"—Moral . . . . . 105

XIII

A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

The Alpine Club—Boccadifalco—The Summit of Cuccio—A Vision of Ætna—San Martino—Monreale . . . . . 115

XIV

SOLUNTO

Winter Scenes—Blossoms and Snowflakes—Bagheria—Ancient Solous—A Carthaginian Town—Men in Sheepskins—A Shipwreck . . . . . 125

## XV

## PIANA DEI GRECI

A Mysterious Hill Town—Spectral Trees—Parco—A Dreary Ride through a Lone Land—An Albanian Colony—Greek Churches—Picturesque Costumes—Curious Customs—Weddings “to Order” . . . . . Page 134

## XVI

## ALONG THE NORTH SHORE

The Coast-line—The Madonian Mountains—La Mafia—Termini—Himera—The Sacrifice of Hamilcar—“The Happy Fields”—Cefalù . . . . . 143

## XVII

## CEFALÙ

An Ancient Sicel Town—Roger II.—His Escape from Shipwreck—Cefalù Cathedral—The Norman Bishop's Church—Its Rich Adornments—“The Finest Mosaics in the World” . . . . . 151

## XVIII

## RAMBLES ABOUT CEFALÙ

La Porta Garibaldi—La Via Libertà—Cloisters of Cefalù—A Cefalù “Trattoria”—Along the Water-front—Diana and Actæon—“Il Trovatore” . . . . . 157

## XIX

## THROUGH FRA DIAVOLO'S COUNTRY

To Corleone—“Village of the Emirs”—Roccabianca, “Castle of Diana”—Baths of Gefalà—Chiarastillo Mountains—Fra Diavolo, “The Prince of Brigands”—His Betrayal and Death . . . . . 166

XX

CORLEONE

**Mezzojuso—An Albanian Town—Rocca Busambra—Il Bosco di Ficuzza—Corleone—A Sicilian Locanda—"The King of Mexico"—"The Annals of the Poor" . . . Page 173**

XXI

JOURNEY TO SEGESTA

**An Early Start—Starlight—Sunrise—Birthplace of Laïs—Cyclops, Giants, and Chimeras Dire—Acres of Wild Flowers—Ancient Rivers—Saracen Strongholds—Calatafimi—Hosts of Beggars . . . . . 183**

XXII

SEGESTA

**A Distant View of a Doric Temple—The Valley of the Gaggera—"The Rolling Scamander"—Fording the Torrent—"A Wild and Lonely Land"—Ancient Segesta—Its Glorious Temple—A Greek Theatre—Wonderful Landscapes . . . . . 190**

XXIII

SELINUS

**The Quarrel of Selinus and Segesta—Salemi—Castelvetro—The Ruined Temples of Selinus—A Scene of Desolation . . . . . 199**

XXIV

A MYSTERIOUS EXCURSION

**"Sleepless Activities"—Trapani at Dawn—An Uncanny Guide—Monte San Giuliano—The Field of Hercules—"Gobbo Brings us Luck"—"A Guide-book in Breeches" . . . . . 209**

## XXV

## A CITY IN CLOUD-LAND

Three Gates of Eryx—Astarte, Aphrodite, Venus, Madonna—Cyclopean Masonry—"A Street in Bagdad"—The Castle of Eryx—Shrine of Venus-Erycina—Return to Earth . . . . . Page 218

## XXVI

## G I R G E N T I

The Land of the Greeks—Acragas—Agrigentum—Mons Camicus—Ruined Temples—"Fairest of Mortal Cities"—La Rupe Atenea . . . . . 227

## XXVII

## THE HEART OF SICILY

Girgenti to Caltanissetta—Sulphur District—Veritable Infernal Regions—Kal-at-al-Nisa ("Fortress of the Women")—A Strange Ride—An Ancient Albergo—"Un Ballo in Maschera"—"Sermons and 'Gazzoza'" . . . . . 237

## XXVIII

## "THE LAND OF DEMETER"

Enna—*Castrum Ennae*—Castrogiovanni—Worship of Ceres—Pagan Rites—Christian Ceremonies—Lake Pergusa—"Flowers of Persephone" . . . . . 246

## XXIX

## THE PLAIN OF CATANIA

"L' Usurajo"—A Sicilian Shylock—The Rival Cities—Valley of the Chrysas—Distant Hill Cities—"Faithless Sperlinga"—Hercules—St. Philip of Agira—Ætna—Catania . . . 255

XXX

C A T A N I A

"Under Ætna" — La Via Lincoln — "Il Duomo" — Tomb of Bellini — Elephant of Heliodorus — Feast of Sant' Agata — "The World that is Never at Rest" . . . . Page 262

XXXI

Æ T N A

Homer, Virgil, Dante — Ascent to Nicolosi — Monti Rossi — Eruption of 1886 — "I Santarelli" — Veil of Sant' Agata 272

XXXII

S Y R A C U S E

"Fields of the Læstrygones" — Lago di Lentini — Leontinoi — Augusta — "The Town of Honey" — Promontory of Thapsus — First Impressions of Syracuse . . . . . 283

XXXIII

O R T Y G I A

Fountain of Arethusa — Temple of Minerva — Temple of Diana — Castello Maniace — Great Harbor — Athenian Expedition — Its Destruction by Gylippus — Death of Nicias . . 291

XXXIV

ACRADINA

Names of Streets — "The City of Wild Pear Trees" — Santa Lucia — The Apostle Paul — La Latomia dei Cappuccini, "The Gethsemane of a Nation" . . . . . 301

XXXV

N E A P O L I S

New Syracuse — Roman Amphitheatre — Grand Altar of Hieron — La Latomia del Paradiso — The Ear of Dionysius — The Bath of Venus — Greek Theatre — Timoleon . . . . 311

## XXXVI

## EPIPOLÆ AND THE ANAPO

Castle of Euryalos—Athenian Siege of Syracuse—Capture of the City by Marcellus—Up the Anapo—Papyrus—Fountain of Cyane—Modern Naiads . . . . . Page 320

## XXXVII

## THE LAND OF THE CYCLOPS

Portus Ulyssis — Polyphemus the Cyclops — "The Columbus of Sicily" — New Naxos — Tauromenion — A Portentous Sunset . . . . . 330

## XXXVIII

## TAORMINA

Snow-flakes and Almond Blossoms — Mola—Teatro Greco—Isola Bella—Castello Alessio—Ætna—Garibaldi Modelled in Snow . . . . . 339

## XXXIX

## FAREWELL TO SICILY

Spellbound — Messina — Scylla and Charybdis—In the Grasp of Charybdis — Messina to Naples — The Rocks of the Sirens . . . . . 349

## APPENDIX

**A**—La Mafia . . . . . 359  
**B**—Brigandage . . . . . 370  
**C**—The Sicilian Question . . . . . 378

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>"IL FORO ITALICO." PALERMO. MONTE PELLEGRINO.</b>    | <i>Frontispiece</i>  |
| <b>A PALERMO CARRETTA . . . . .</b>                     | <i>Facing page 6</i> |
| <b>SANCTUARY OF SANTA ROSALIA . . . . .</b>             | <b>" " 16</b>        |
| <b>"LA CALA." PALERMO. (THE OLD HARBOR). . . . .</b>    | <b>" " 24</b>        |
| <b>PULPIT. CAPPELLA PALATINA, PALERMO. . . . .</b>      | <b>" " 32</b>        |
| <b>MONREALE CATHEDRAL. (INTERIOR). . . . .</b>          | <b>" " 40</b>        |
| <b>CLOISTERS. MONREALE . . . . .</b>                    | <b>" " 48</b>        |
| <b>CARVED CAPITALS. CLOISTERS OF MONREALE. . . . .</b>  | <b>" " 56</b>        |
| <b>PALERMO CATHEDRAL . . . . .</b>                      | <b>" " 64</b>        |
| <b>SICILIAN (SARACEN TYPE). . . . .</b>                 | <b>" " 72</b>        |
| <b>"STREET ARABS" . . . . .</b>                         | <b>" " 80</b>        |
| <b>S. GIOVANNI DEGLI EREMITI. PALERMO . . . . .</b>     | <b>" " 88</b>        |
| <b>A FORTUNE-TELLER . . . . .</b>                       | <b>" " 96</b>        |
| <b>A SICILIAN "MADONNA" . . . . .</b>                   | <b>" " 102</b>       |
| <b>SICILIANA . . . . .</b>                              | <b>" " 112</b>       |
| <b>NORMAN WINDOW. PALERMO . . . . .</b>                 | <b>" " 120</b>       |
| <b>SARACENIC-NORMAN WINDOW. SYRACUSE . . . . .</b>      | <b>" " 128</b>       |
| <b>INTERIOR OF CEFALÙ CATHEDRAL: . . . . .</b>          | <b>" " 136</b>       |
| <b>AN ANCIENT WELL . . . . .</b>                        | <b>" " 144</b>       |
| <b>SICILIAN PEASANTS . . . . .</b>                      | <b>" " 152</b>       |
| <b>A MILKMAID . . . . .</b>                             | <b>" " 160</b>       |
| <b>SICILIAN (ARAB TYPE). . . . .</b>                    | <b>" " 168</b>       |
| <b>SICILIAN (GREEK TYPE) . . . . .</b>                  | <b>" " 176</b>       |
| <b>SICILIAN MOUNTAINEER . . . . .</b>                   | <b>" " 184</b>       |
| <b>NORMAN AND SARACEN TYPES . . . . .</b>               | <b>" " 192</b>       |
| <b>TEMPLE OF SEGESTA . . . . .</b>                      | <b>" " 200</b>       |
| <b>TEMPLES OF MINERVA AND APOLLO. SELINUS . . . . .</b> | <b>" " 206</b>       |

|   |                    |     |
|---|--------------------|-----|
| SELINUS. TEMPLE OF HERCULES (ACROPOLIS) . . .             | <i>Facing page</i> | 216 |
| MONTE SAN GIULIANO (ERYX). <sup>o</sup> TRAPANI . . . . . | " "                | 224 |
| GIRGENTI. FROM TEMPLE OF JOVE . . . . .                   | " "                | 232 |
| TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA. GIRGENTI . . . . .                   | " "                | 240 |
| TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX. GIRGENTI . . . . .           | " "                | 248 |
| ÆTNA, FROM HARBOR OF CATANIA . . . . .                    | " "                | 256 |
| "THE ROCKS OF THE CYCLOPS" . . . . .                      | " "                | 264 |
| "A PASSION FLOWER" . . . . .                              | " "                | 272 |
| FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA. SYRACUSE. . . . .                   | " "                | 280 |
| VENUS LANDOLINA. SYRACUSE. . . . .                        | " "                | 288 |
| "EAR OF DIONYSIUS." SYRACUSE. . . . .                     | " "                | 296 |
| GREEK THEATRE. SYRACUSE . . . . .                         | " "                | 304 |
| LATOMIA DEI CAPPUCCHINI. SYRACUSE . . . . .               | " "                | 312 |
| RIVER ANAPO (WITH PAPYRUS). . . . .                       | " "                | 320 |
| VIEW OF ÆTNA, FROM SYRACUSE . . . . .                     | " "                | 328 |
| GREEK THEATRE. TAORMINA . . . . .                         | " "                | 336 |
| BADIA VECCHIA. TAORMINA . . . . .                         | " "                | 344 |
| CASTELLO S. ALESSIO . . . . .                             | " "                | 352 |
| MESSINA CATHEDRAL . . . . .                               | " "                | 360 |
| CARVED PORTAL. MESSINA CATHEDRAL. . . . .                 | " "                | 368 |
| STRAIT OF MESSINA (AT MESSINA). . . . .                   | " "                | 376 |
| MAP OF SICILY . . . . .                                   |                    | 385 |

# PICTURESQUE SICILY



# PICTURESQUE SICILY

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## I

### SICILY AT LAST!

From Naples to Palermo—Capri to Pellegrino—A Storm from the *Æneid*—The *Æolian Islands*—*Post Nubila Phœbus*—Snow Peaks and Orange Groves—"Il Conco d' Oro"—"Palermo the Superb"—"The Land of Brigands, Earthquakes, and Social Disorders."

*December 6.*—The course of *The Malta* from Naples to Palermo, a distance of about one hundred and seventy-five nautical miles, lay south-by-east across that part of the Mediterranean known as "Mare Tirreno"—the Tyrrhenian Sea. All night long, from Capri onward, the steamer battled with head-winds and opposing waves, and her unhappy passengers had many reasons to remember that, through the blackness of the starless winter watches, they were passing close by the *Æolian Islands*—the ancient home of all the winds. Little control did King *Æolus* exert over his subjects that December night. The struggling gales and sounding tempests, escaping from their prison-house, danced aloft in air and hissed along the sea. It was a night of trying experiences and long vigils—

the hours lingered remorselessly, the minutes loitered, while darkness brooded over the face of the deep. Almost at the end of human endurance day dawned, the sun arose, the winds abated, and, as we ran in under the lee of Sicily, the waves decreased in violence.

Quick-tempered and lightly stirred to wrath is the Mediterranean, and violent in its rage; but its passionate outbreaks—terrible while they last—are soon calmed. When the wicked tempests cease from troubling and the weary winds are at rest, placid waters succeed angry seas as suddenly as the billows arose when the storm broke in its first fury. Order succeeds anarchy—as Mr. Dryden puts it:

“The waves unruffle and the sea subsides.”

After a night of hideous blackness and shrieking storm, such as affrighted Æneas and his Trojans ages ago, what time they were driven back from the Tuscan Sea to be thrown in shipwreck upon the Carthaginian coast, there dawned a morning of sunshine and gentle land-breezes. When we came on deck, at sunrise, the sky was as blue as the heavens that bend over the valley of the Hudson on an October morning, save where the scattering clouds, white shining, fled away towards “the seven stars,” to the distant land of winter and Alpine snows.

Far ahead of us, in the south, we descried a range of mountains uplifted grandly from the sea, showing in purple silhouettes crested with roseate snow. It was the coast-line of Sicily, finely limned against an opalescent sky. In the northwest, upon our star-board quarter, thirty miles or more away, lay the Island of Ustica; in the east the Lipari (Æolian) Isl-

ands floated athwart the level rays of the rising sun on an ocean of golden light. It was a brilliant, a glorious morning; the air was invigorating, the atmosphere remarkably transparent. We forgot our woes, the deadly sinkings and upheavals of the night, and eagerly scanning the sea and shore, feasted our eyes upon the inspiring picture. As we drew nearer to the coast mountains seemed to advance from out the golden distance; great headlands and promontories grew towards the sea; shadows withdrew into the depths of valleys; the brows of precipices and the crests of rock-ribbed mountain-steeps caught the glory of the morning; intervening hills, becoming luminous, stood out in high relief in front of the "Sicilian Apennines." Last of all, the lowlands and the sea-shore received the day and glowed in russet-brown and tawny-yellow of fallow fields, in green of meadows girt with deeper green of orange-trees and silver-gray of olive groves.

On either hand, as we steamed into the Bay of Palermo, two vast promontories towered superbly from the sea: to the left, but miles away in the southeast, Monte Zaffarano; to the right and close aboard, Monte Pellegrino.

Strangely familiar in aspect—in contour and in color—seemed the nearer mountain. We could easily fancy we were back again at Capri, sailing along that flank of it which confronts the Bay of Naples. Capri we had, indeed, beheld the evening before, glorified by the setting sun. Pellegrino was now before us, resplendent in a mantle of morning light; but so like Capri! Two Dromio mountains! So similar in bulk, in height, in sky-line, we could readily imagine that

Æolus had driven us back past "The Rocks of the Sirens"—that in the night-time we had blindly recrossed the Tuscan Sea, as Virgil calls it, and were again under the lee of Monte Solaro, navigating the Bay of Naples, midway between Sorrento and Cape Miseno.

The north and east faces of Monte Pellegrino overlook the Mediterranean; its southeastern precipices rise from the margin of the Bay of Palermo; while from the base of its southern crags the shore, describing a crescent twelve miles in length, extends around to Monte Zaffarano in the east. From a long curving line of white breakers falling upon yellow sands the land emerging from the sea ascends in gentle acclivity of meadows and rich plantations of orange and lemon groves and gardens of rare luxuriance. Farther inland, upon softly undulating hillocks, flourish thousands upon thousands of almond and olive trees; and beyond, vineclad hills rise in terraces to the base of the mountains that enclose a fertile plain within a vast amphitheatre. This "pianura," lying in the sunlight between the mountains and the sea, is Il Conco d'Oro—"The Golden Horn of Plenty," so called by poets in ancient times; and in this Golden Shell, "Palermo the Superb" shines like a pearl in an emerald chalice. Palermo, "The White City," surrounded by gardens where grow the myrtle and the palm, the ilex, laurel, pomegranate, and fig-tree; where oranges hang "like golden lamps in a green night," where the almond flourishes and the citron blooms; where every month blossom tropical flowers that vie in beauty with the rose, the lily, and the jessamine.

The red roofs, domes, towers, minarets of the city

stand up against a rich background of vegetation ; and beyond, across a band of variegated greenery, rise the mountains, with masses of snow on their summits, which still reflect, as do the feathery clouds, the glories of early morning.

Palermo looks seaward, facing the northeast. In front of it are two harbors having one and the same entrance. "Il Porto," the modern basin (that to the right as vessels enter from the bay), is protected from storms by "Il Braccio del Molo", "La Cala," the ancient harbor, opens on the left, and before it there extends, forming an angle, the breakwater "Antemurale." The Arm of the Mole and the Ante-mole reach out from the shore like the claws of a crab, and within their embrace the commercial navy of Palermo finds safe and convenient anchorage.

Panormus, "All Harbor," was the name given to the seaport by its Græco-Sicilian colonists. The Carthaginians, according to some authorities, called it Mahhanat, "A Fortified Camp"; according to others, "Sis," or "Tsits," "The Flower." This last title may well have been bestowed upon it in consideration of the charm and loveliness of the ancient colony; it is a name that may be used advisedly, to-day, to describe Palermo, than which "there are few spots upon the surface of the globe more beautiful." \*

Shortly before nine o'clock *The Malta*, slowly rounding the south end of Il Braccio del Molo, headed north, and drifting a cable's length came to anchor in Il Porto. Before the steamer was made fast to her moorings she was surrounded by a flotilla of small

\* J. ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

boats with prows or cut-waters rising a yard or more above the line of their gunwales—after the fashion of the “ferro” of a gondola. In other respects also the “barche” are quaint and curious in shape and build. It is not their model, however, that calls for particular mention, but the dazzling brilliancy and bewildering variety of colors with which they were painted without and within. There were scores of these “bum-boats,” and as they arranged themselves in circles around the steamer, the surface of Il Porto resembled a vast palette spread with all the bright pigments needed to paint a picture of the gaudiest of Dutch villages. In such gay company, *The Malta*, in her customary suit of solemn black, suggested comparison with a crow in the midst of a flock of paroquets, or a gentleman in conventional evening attire at a fancy-dress ball.

In keeping with the brilliant hues of the smaller boats were the colors of the coasting vessels and fishing-smacks moored against The Mole, or returning from and departing to the sea. Chioggia, the dream of artists who are set in ecstasies by the multicolored sails that decorate the lagoons of Venice, was never so gorgeously arrayed as was the water-front of the White City on the morning of our arrival in Sicilian waters.

All in good time we took passage in one of the wonderful boats and followed our baggage to the Dogana landing-stage, where we disembarked; custom-house formalities gave us little trouble and but a moment's pause.

At last we set foot in Sicily, “The land of brigands, earthquakes, and social disorders.” So it had been

A PALERMO CASSETTA



described to us by our friends in America, who, when bidding us farewell, charged us "not to do anything rash"; by English people, who, when we announced our destination, summed up their surprise in the exclamation, "Only fancy!" Germans whom we had met at Naples and Capri advised us to read Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and to go to Greece if it were Greek ruins we were in search of; and a Frenchman, who, in answer to his inquiries, learned of our intention to spend the winter in Sicily—Sicily of all places!—shrugged his shoulders and politely inquired: "Les Américains wish to make the acquaintance of Fra Diavolo?"

It was not without certain misgivings that we landed in the mysterious island which René Bazin describes as "un pays qui fut dangereux, et pourrait l'être encore."

Of earthquakes and social disorders we had no experience while we were in Sicily, and after the first day of our stay in Palermo we took no further thought of such matters. As for Sicilian brigands, we did not have to go out of our way to fall in with the most celebrated and redoubted members of that fraternity, nor did we have long to wait. On our way from "Il Molo" to our hotel we crossed La Piazza Ucciardone, on one side of which stands the great prison ("vicaria") founded by Ferdinand II. in 1834, and constructed in its latest additions on the model of the famous Moyamensing Penitentiary in Philadelphia.

Issuing from the prison gates, there came across the piazza a prison-van, guarded by two "carabinieri" and six "bersaglieri." The conductor of the omnibus in which we were being conveyed to the Hôtel des

Palmes, observant of the particular notice we took of the passing vehicle, informed us that in it were ten brigands, members of "La Banda Maurina," desperate villains all of them, on their way from La Prigione to the Corte d' Assiso, where they had been on trial for several days for crimes and misdemeanors—videlicet: murders, abductions, extortions, cattle-stealing, arson, and the like. We gazed with intense interest at the van, inspecting it curiously, as country-boys examine the wagon alleged to contain the cage of serpents belonging to a menagerie about to be exhibited in their native village; and we wondered if all—in very truth all—the members of La Banda Maurina were inside.

Beyond doubt, then, there were brigands in Sicily! But as those we positively knew of were safe under lock and key, and guarded by eight riflemen, we felt reassured and continued our journey at ease in body and mind. Soon we dismissed the strange and startling incident from our thoughts, for Palermo interested us, charmed us. We found it one of the brightest, most picturesque, as well as one of the cleanest cities we had visited in many a day of travelling; and all in good time we arrived at the Hôtel des Palmes, where we chose apartments the windows of which looked out upon two of the many beautiful gardens of Palermo.

## II

### THE CAPITAL OF SICILY

**"Knowest Thou the Land?"—"The Pearl of the Mediterranean"—"A Transformed Palace"—A Picturesque Wreck—"The Bells, Bells, Bells,"—Street Cries—The Wonderful Palermo Carts—A Picture-gallery on Wheels—A Land of a "Strange, Eventful History."**

WE had arrived in the capital city of a country to which we had been attracted as mysteriously as was Sindbad to the "Island of Loadstone." We had set out on our voyage to Sicily in simple faith, believing that, in due time, we should come to our desired haven, Palermo. We had determined to adjust ourselves to new circumstances and strange surroundings; had made up our minds "to have a good time" in spite of ordinary, or even some extraordinary, discomforts. We had but little fear that we should not enjoy travelling under any and all conditions, for we had been abroad in the world and knew how, and were disposed, to take things as we found them. Moreover, we cherished the hope that we should find pleasure and profit both in mind and body by sojourning in a country concerning which we had recently held much discourse with a certain venturesome friend who had lately visited the wonderland. To our eager inquiries about Sicily, its scenery, its history,

I\*

and its people, he had made answer—Yankee-like—by asking a question :

“ Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blühen,  
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühen,  
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,  
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht?  
Kennst du es wohl?”

We had to confess we did not know the land, had not even been aware that it was Sicily Goethe had in mind when he formulated the question in melodious German verse. The words sank into our hearts, and we began dreaming of the day when—the Fates being propitious—we should behold “The Pearl of the Mediterranean” in all its loveliness.

And now we were actually in Sicily! Unknown strangers in a strange land; ignorant—let us confess it—of everything concerning the geography of the island of to-day, of its inhabitants, of its modern history, of the manners and customs of its people, or of its politics and sociology. In the great city, in all the island, we had, so far as we could guess, never a friend, no one even whom we could call an acquaintance. The sights, the sounds, mankind, the aspect of places and things were strange and new to us, the very atmosphere, the sunlight, the summery December air seemed unnatural; and yet we entered Palermo joyously, and, presenting ourselves with the freedom of the city, immediately made ourselves at home and comfortable in a transformed palace, taking possession of our apartment as if we had been the ancient lords of it coming to their own again.

We had planned a stay of two weeks in Palermo.

We dwelt there in health and happiness for three months lacking a few days. We did not idle away the time, although we learned the significance of the happy Italian phrase, "dolce far niente"; and practised that gentle art assiduously. How the days flew! How the weeks grew into months, and the months transformed themselves into a quarter of a year, we are at a loss to tell. We seemed to lose all count of time, mislaid days recklessly; and, every week, made the discovery that Sunday had stolen upon us unawares while we were wondering if yesterday was Friday.

Palermo interested, charmed us; we loved to study it, to view it in all its aspects; to conjugate it, so to speak, in all its moods and tenses. It was ever changing, presenting each day new attractions for our delectation. We delighted to wander up and down in it, to sit in the sunlight enjoying the quiet of its gardens, to be out in the air, to catch glimpses up and down its streets of the blue sea spreading to the east of it, of the purple mountains beyond Il Conco d' Oro. We left our guide-books at home and sallied forth to saunter hither and thither, enjoying the sensation of getting lost in its maze of highways and byways, and for no other reason than that we might have the sport of finding our way back to the Hôtel des Palmes. On occasion we asked our way or inquired the name of a church or palace of passers-by, merely to make an opportunity for studying an interesting face or picturesque costume, and because it gave us pleasure to be courteously entreated by people who, in their politeness, seemed at least to consider it a compliment to be accosted by a friendly foreigner.

We spent the first hour or two, after our arrival at our "albergo," in the employment of "setting ourselves to rights," varied by looking out of the windows, one of which, opening towards the rising sun, gave upon the garden of the hotel, a garden of palms. Two south windows afforded access to balconies, from which we could see up and down the Via Stabile—up to the I Quattro Canti di Campagna, and the hills beyond Il Conco d'Oro; down to Il Porto, which opens upon a wide expanse of deep-blue sea. Across the street was another garden—a large square—in which grew a bewildering variety of palms, evergreens, and trees that shed their leaves shortly before Christmas, to put them forth again early in the new year. Above the red-tiled roofs of the houses, far beyond the limits of the town, mountain peaks rose to view, and hitherwards numberless minarets, towers, and domes stood up in the sunlight, shining against a background of purple, violet, and misty blue.

At the foot of the Via Stabile, a hundred yards or less from shore, a large bark, which, in entering the harbor pilotless, had run upon a sunken reef, lay upon her bilge, her topmasts gone by the board, her rigging all unset. She made a picturesque but pathetic object, in our view. It was so strange to see a great ship seemingly lying in the middle of a city street, almost at the doors of the houses! Every morning during our stay in Palermo our first glance from our south window was directed down the street, to see if the derelict had slipped into deep water and drifted away during the night. But there she stuck week after week, and slowly the remorseless waves devoured

her piecemeal, within biscuit-toss of the harbor inner-wall.

It so happened that we arrived in Palermo on a fête-day. The city was decorated, embellished with countless flags and banners, and its citizens were in holiday attire. It was a "festa" in honor of the Holy Virgin, the celebration of which continued for three days, and during all that time the populace made merry in their light-hearted, good-natured fashion. All the church bells—and their number is legion—were ringing incessantly. "Ringing," however, hardly conveys an adequate idea of the billows, the deluges, of sound that rolled, echoing and re-echoing through the air. Be it noted that the Sicilian church-bells are not rung like "Father Prout's"—"swinging uproarious"; but hang motionless and are struck with hammers in the hands of muscular bell-men. This method of manipulating bells permits of rapid and strong percussion; the strokes follow each other faster than they can be counted. There is no solemn ding-dong, ding-dong, about the bells of Palermo. Sharp-smitten, they clang away fortissimo, staccatissimo. One, two, three! bang, bang, bang! One, two, three, four! bang, bang, bang!—da capo—over and over again; the monotony of the sound varied occasionally by a volley of bangs that reminds one of the alarm signal "All ashore," as performed on a steamship's bell to warn the friends of passengers that it is time for all who are going ashore to go.

On that day, of all Sicilian days, the 27th of May, 1860, when the red-shirted Immortals—"The Thousand of Garibaldi"—captured the city, the citizens, frantic with joy, rushed to the belfry to sound the

tocsin; they found that Maniscalco's police spies had removed the bell-clappers. "Nothing daunted, they beat the bells all day with hammers and other implements, and so produced an indescribable noise, which had a material influence on the nerves of the terrified Neapolitan troops." \*

Of the sonorous quality and remarkable power of Sicilian lungs and vocal organs we had abundant proof from the moment of our arrival in Palermo. Not even in Naples had our ears been assailed by such a cacophony of street cries. To the wild accompaniment of the bells, the chorus of fruit, vegetable, and fish-mongers, sellers of nuts, sea-weed—"frutti di mare"—cakes, candies, flowers, and other miscellaneous dealers in indescribable wares, rose and fell upon the air, reproducing babel, confusion worse confounding, until our tympana seemed ready to crack under the blows of sound. Our attention was kept constantly on the *qui vive*. When we peeped from our windows or stood on our balcony looking boldly up and down the street, we were astounded by vociferous appeals directed presumably at us, to induce us to buy their wares, by a host of hucksters who made the most frantic demonstrations in their efforts to attract our attention.

If we had found food for astonishment in the brilliant and variegated colorings of the flotilla of small boats that surrounded *The Malta* on her arrival in the harbor, the gaudiness—not to say glory—of the "Palermo Carts," the marvellous vehicles which serve the

\* COUNTESS E. MARTINENGO CESARESCO. *The Liberation of Italy* page 281.

trade and traffic of the town and in which the better class of vendors convey their wares from door to door for the convenience of customers, awakened wonder and challenged our admiration. These "carrette," constructed in a novel manner, consist of a pair of yellow wheels, the hubs and spokes of which are striped and tricked out with bands and rings of contrasting colors and yellow shafts similarly decorated. The body of the vehicle, a square box twice as wide as it is deep, is also painted a fresh lemon color within and without; and it is further embellished with bizarre pictures representing scenes drawn from the world of fact and fancy.

During our stay in Palermo we spent much time in gadding about the streets, in our endeavors to study the art of the carretta painter, and solve, if possible, the allegories figured forth in glowing colors by brushes manipulated with no little skill and surprising daring, not to say freedom of touch. The school of art from which the painters who adorn all sides of these surprising vehicles seem to have sought inspiration is decidedly pre-Cimabuesque, reminiscent of the Byzantine. Mythology is represented by tableaux of the Greeks encamped before Troy, Æneas carrying off Anchises, Dido on her funeral pile, Æneas landing in Sicily—the latter a very favorite theme, as was to be expected. There are innumerable illustrations of incidents in the life of Ulysses, of Achilles, of Pyrrhus; representations of Olympian gods and demi-gods, heroes, goddesses, dryads, nymphs. There are pictures of adventures, of combats; apparitions of pagan deities and Christian saints to favored mortals. Historical subjects there are also: the meeting of Richard and

•

Saladin, the capture of Jerusalem by the Saracens, the landing of Roger in Sicily, a Turkish camp surprised by Greeks (the last evidently an incident from the Greek War of Independence), Turks massacring Christians, assassination of Julius Cæsar, and many other illustrations of celebrated murders and innumerable scenes from the war of the Sicilian Vespers. One series of pictures especially interested us—we found it repeated *ad libitum*, and all the carrette so decorated were, if not new, at least of recent manufacture. We were told that these particular carts were replicas of the Sicilian carretta exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago. On one side-board were two panels—one representing Columbus at the Court of Queen Isabella, the other Isabella giving Columbus her crown jewels. On the other side-board were likewise two tableaux—Columbus discovering America and Columbus crowned King of America.

The catalogue of this peripatetic picture-gallery could be spun out to greater length than the Homeric register of the Greek navy—indeed, to set it in type would be to compile a volume as large as the official catalogues of the paintings in the Pitti Palace, at least; if indeed it did not equal in bulk the catalogues of the Louvre or the Prado. There were panels representing scenes, no doubt, of present contemporaneous interest: A personage in Sicilian costume (presumably a brigand) standing on a mountain peak defying soldiers by brandishing a blunderbuss; the same surrounded by soldiers firing a volley, evidently in order to induce the personage to surrender; the same looking through prison bars; and the hanging of the same by a masked and cloaked hangman.

**SANCTUARY OF SANTA ROSALIA**





Other series of four panels pictured the horrors of a dissecting-room, others dealt with the story of Jonah and the whale, Daniel and his lions, Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, the Four Evangelists ; Popes, many ; saints, innumerable ; St. George and his dragon ; "San Giuliano appealing to the Normans" to encourage them to renewed attacks upon the Saracens. There were fanciful portraits of beautiful women and handsome men ; knights and ladies ; enchanters, fairies, monsters, and angels ; devils and monks. Many carts were adorned with scenes from Italian operas, and many more with designs of fruits and flowers or gaudy landscapes — Ætna in eruption, for instance, and storms at sea. In the endless collection were portraits of Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Julius Cæsar, Dionysius of Syracuse, Charlemagne, Don John of Austria, Barbarossa the Pirate, Richard the Lion-hearted, Giovanni di Procida, Napoleon I., Abraham Lincoln, Vittorio Emanuele, King Umberto ; and, more numerous than all, of Giuseppe Garibaldi. The marvellous vehicles, thus decorated, are drawn by asses tricked out in all the colors of sunset, with pompons nodding on their heads and from the middle of their backs, and all clothed in gaudy harnesses, to which are attached rosettes, bows of ribbons, and bright bunches and bits of tapes and cords of the brightest hues.

These arrangements in polychrome parade the streets, "coquets et colorés," droll and fantastical, attractive to the eye, fascinating the mind—like rebuses, as Guy de Maupassant calls them, which out-puzzle thought, and of which one is constantly seeking the solution. Nevertheless, the carrette are most

interesting and worthy of particular mention and detailed description, because, in some sort, they serve to render popular many facts and incidents culled from the chronicles, real and mythological, of Sicily—the land of a “strange, eventful history.”

### III

#### MONTE PELLEGRINO

**Italian Cavalry—The Soldiers of Hamilcar Barca—"La Strada di Montagna"—Satyrs and Pan-pipes—May-flowers in December—An Ancient Monastery—The Shrine of Santa Rosalia—A Saintly Daughter of Kings—The Vision of Goethe—View from the Summit of Pellegrino.**

**WHEN** we beheld Monte Pellegrino, rising in noble outlines from the sea high into the morning sunlight—our first glimpse of the Sicilian shore—we determined to make the ascent to its summit, thence to study the topography of Palermo, Il Conco d' Oro, and the surrounding mountains. Accordingly, the day after our arrival, the weather being fine, the air fresh and invigorating—the very morning for a mountain expedition—we passed out of the north gate of the city, Porta San Giorgio, and, taking the Via del Monte Pellegrino, came to "la falda di montagna"—that is to say, to "the skirts of the mountain." Pursuing our journey, we crossed a plain, on which a company of Italian cavalry was going through its evolutions. We halted for a few moments to watch the movements of the troop, and we remember trying to imagine the havoc that small body of men, armed with carbines and other modern tools of war, would have played with the soldiers of Hamilcar Barca, who

pitched their tents on that same plain, at the foot of Ercta (the ancient name of Monte Pellegrino), two thousand one hundred and forty-one years ago.

At the foot of Monte Pellegrino we found awaiting us an "asinajo," with two well-kept, well-fed beasts of the patient tribe which, as the Sicilian proverb runs, "Porta il vino e beë l' acqua." \* They were sturdy, laborious creatures, and, if not willing travellers, nevertheless went their gait perseveringly, doubtless mindful of that other proverb, "Asino duro, baston duro." † We lost no time in mounting our steeds, which graciously permitted us to do so without protest. Indeed, so meekly, and withal so stolidly, did they submit to the manœuvre that we conceived a violent suspicion we were being beguiled into delusions of security from which we were certain to be aroused, sooner or later, when, at a more convenient season, our "asini" took it into their heads to masquerade for one wild moment in lions' skins. Our asinajo informing us that the asini were "giovani" and "multi forti," cast loose their tethers, dealt each of them a preliminary whack with his cudgel, as he gave voice to a shrill, guttural cry, "Ah-ee!" "Avanti!" and our cavalcade began the ascent of La Strada di Montagna, a broad, substantially built viaduct, with arches and piers; a miracle of boldness for seventeenth-century engineers. It zigzags up the mountain, crossing and recrossing a precipitous ravine, down which in winter-time pour great torrents of water. Fifteen or twenty times La Strada leaps from side to side, until one does, indeed, marvel how

\* Carries wine and drinks water.

† Stubborn ass, hard stick.

the engineers found their way up the precipices, and where the builders stood while laying the foundations.

Shortly after starting we overtook a flock of over a thousand goats—there may have been more, certainly there were not fewer. Surely we never saw so many of the tribe before—all kinds, all colors, all ages and conditions of goats. Behind them followed, constantly shouting the strange cry “Ah-ee!” a number of goat-herds, brown and sun-burned, ragged and unkempt, some clothed in sheepskin trousers and coats, others bare-legged save for knee-breeches, and all of them wearing upper garments of goatskin. Queer, unnatural-looking beings—satyr-like! We could almost fancy that one old fellow with squalid beard and a most un-Sicilian-looking paunch, was Silenus himself. We were ready to believe that all of the uncanny company, had Pan himself been there to pipe, would have gone dancing and whirling away over the rocks amid the vines and ferns, after the manner of their kind before Christian saints drove away the Pagan gods from Panormus and sent the mountain and woodland deities a-packing.

And why not fancy that—or anything?

We were among wild scenery of rocks and towering crags, flitting fearsomely over shadow-grasping gulfs and yawning chasms, alone in a savage world, and there around us were all the accessories needed to set the mind romancing, turning courage and lightness of heart to softness and superstition. Why not fancy the return of Pan? Indeed, more improbable day-dreams might well be conjured up by imaginations susceptible to the influence of time and place;

for by the roadside, in December, within a week or two of Christmas, we beheld daisies, marigolds, and sweet alyssum, wild thyme, flowering-mint and dandelions, pink-tipped asters, budding trefolia, sorrel, and last, but not least, purple violets, peeping shyly at us; familiar eyes that glanced and gleamed pleasantly in the mellow sunlight. The view of them gladdened sight wearied by the savage aspect of sullen crags and inhospitable peaks of the overhanging mountain. And all these flowers were blooming in loveliness within a fortnight of Christmas! December in the gay motley of May! The world was growing young again! Why not satyrs and Pan-pipes?

Having passed the last arches that bore the road back and forth, across and up the ravine, we followed a paved highway from the north around to the west front of the mountain, and came to a halt at the foot of a broad flight of steps cut in the rock. We left our asses untethered, not doubting that we should find them again, and, ascending fifty steps or more, stood before the great door of an ancient monastery.

We had left the bright and bustling city behind us scarce an hour ago, and here we were, seemingly as remote from life and its affairs as if we had crossed a desert, or had climbed some vast St. Bernard, and stood before the gates of an ancient brotherhood, "The world forgetting, by the world forgot." Suddenly there came from within the gloomy walls the muffled fluting of an organ and the harmony of sweet voices singing. It was the monks within at prayers; unseen choristers were chanting an old Gregorian hymn dear to the ear, touching the heart, one that lingers sweetly in the memory. Within were peace

and quietness; only the outer world seemed dreary and desolate.

Presently, in answer to our knocking, a postern door was opened by an old monk, at whose invitation we entered a vestibule, at one end of which was a sacristy, at the other a mural shrine, before which flickered three or four nearly burned-out candles. The ceiling was supported by twisted monoliths of red marble, surmounted by carved capitals of florid design. Strange it was to stand in the shadow of this entrance-hall, looking beyond the pillars to find the sunshine falling into a court-yard that served as a nave, the vault of which was heaven, its walls, that on the right unhewn cliffs, that on the left a continuation of the masonry of the vestibule. At one side of this square, open space was a baptismal font, a natural well; and beyond, across the court, there opened a large cavern into the mountain-side, in the interior of which many candles twinkled on a high altar, where a priest was saying mass. The silence of the place was broken only by the murmur of prayer, the welling of the organ, and the song of the choristers. We could guess at, rather than see, the figures of the monks in their stalls on each side of the grotto.

Crossing the roofless nave we entered the chancel, a mysterious cave, with stalactites hanging from its ceiling, beneath which was suspended an odd and complicated system of lead gutters to catch the water that otherwise would drip on priests and worshippers. Our ghostly cicerone pointed to a seat where we placed ourselves behind the robed and cowed monks at the side of the gospel-desk. The front part of the cavern was lighted by the sun; the inner re-

cesses were in darkness, save where the light from the candles on the altar faintly illumined the walls and roof of the mysterious sanctuary.

When mass was over, and the echoes of the last Amen had died away, when the holy fathers had one by one stolen softly from the cavern, returning to the cells in their dormitory, our guide lighted a taper and bid us look within a glass-case enclosing a shrine under an altar that stood to the left of the chancel. Kneeling where Goethe had knelt, to pry, like him, into the mysteries of the tomb, we were willing to believe that we beheld what he more than a century ago thus described :

“ By the steady light of a small lamp I beheld the form of a beautiful woman. She lay as one in an ecstasy, her eyes half closed, her head softly resting on her right hand, on which were many rings. I could not with a certainty distinguish her features, nevertheless they seemed to me still to possess a wondrous charm. Her garments were of tinsel gilt, which had the appearance of rich and delicate cloth of gold. The head and hands were of white marble, sculptured, if not in the highest style of art, nevertheless so naturally and beautifully wrought that one must believe the figure breathed and moved. A little angel stands by her as if to fan her with a lily, fair and white.”

All this we tried to see—like Goethe, giving ourselves over to the passing illusion of the place and its inspirations ; but our imagination fluttered feebly where his had fearlessly soared, and we turned away in disgust from the tawdry, grewsome simulacrum of the saint, and tried to forget even what we had seen, or tried to make believe we saw.\* As one seeks to

\* “ When Professor Buckland, the eminent osteologist and geologist, discovered that the relics of Rosalia, at Palermo, which had for ages cured

"LA CALA." PALERMO. (THE OLD HARBOR)





take away a bad taste from the mouth by substituting a more agreeable flavor, so we, endeavoring to blot out the offensive spectacle—a burlesque of the victory over death—turned our eyes to the light and the sweet realities of life. We welcomed the sight of some dainty maidenhair ferns, growing in the sunlight around the coping of the well in the open court—the nave—of the church. An old well truly, and picturesque, which serves as baptismal font, holy-water ewer, and drinking-fountain, where babies are christened, where monks and pilgrims devoutly cross themselves and drink to be cured of evil diseases.

From the chapel of Santa Rosalia to the top of Monte Pellegrino is an interesting climb, easily accomplished by a good walker in twenty minutes. The view from the summit is vast in its extent, varied in its features; a landscape of sea and shore, of islands and mainland, of wide ocean and sheltered bays. In the east, as far as the eye can reach, Cape Orlando rises from the Mediterranean, and hitherward extends the range of mountains, the Sicilian Apennines, which skirt the northern coast of Sicily. Many of the peaks soar to heights varying between five and six thousand feet, to culminate in Pizzo dell' Antenna, which uplifts its crest six thousand four hundred and eighty feet above the sea. Cape Orlando runs far out into the sea, pointing north to Vulcano, nearest of all the Æolian Islands to the Sicilian main. Four more of the group appear to the northwest of Vulcano, but Strom-

diseases and warded off epidemics, were the bones of a goat, this fact caused not the slightest diminution of their miraculous power."—  
ANDREW D. WHITE. *A History of Warfare of Science with Theology.*

boli, like *Ætna* in the far east, hides itself in mists. To the north we behold distant *Ustica*, and midway between it and the foot of *Pellegrino* we discover a wee black speck, from which a plume of smoke extends along the west wind. Like a tiny "umbrella-ant," the packet from *Palermo* bound to the island of *Ustica* crawls almost imperceptibly across boundless space two hours out, with two hours more to crawl before it enters its desired haven. Even while we are looking at it, it disappears, distance absorbs it as the sea drinks a raindrop. From the foot of *Pellegrino*, extending around the margin of the Bay of *Palermo*, a line of surf shows like a string of white beads, and broad sand-beaches, dwindled to mere threads of gold, embroider the green mantle of *Il Conco d'Oro*. With peculiar distinctness sounds and echoes rise through the calm air, shrill, plaintive, pathetic, the cries of children, theirs alone distinct; all other voices hushed, the droning of the city, the whisper of the waves breaking on the sands; the souging of the wind in the tree-tops, as soft, as solemn, as impressive as the hollow murmurs of the oracles of the ancient gods. Herdsmen leading their flocks on distant hill-sides utter strange, croaking sounds—"Ah-ee!"—and ravens flitting about the spires and steeples of *Pellegrino* mimic the cries with impish cleverness. The flocks we had passed that morning, on our way up the mountain, now scattered over the foot-hills, creep everywhere, like white ants swarming on their hills of pine-needles and withered leaves, and the bleating of lambs sounds like the shrilling of crickets and katydids. Wonderfully near seems the barking of a dog, and yet the house he watches is but a dot of white in the wilderness of greenery. Mysteri-

ously far away seems the world; men we see none, only their dwellings; but always there come up to us the cries of living things and the voices of Nature, like invocations rising through the serene ether to Olympus.

Palermo well deserves her name, "La Bianca"—The White City; for the stone of which her palaces and dwellings are constructed is of a very light-cream color, white shining in the brilliant sunlight; so that from Pellegrino one beholds a city of marble. Imagine, if you can, the beauty of such a city seated between the sea and Il Conco d'Oro, a vast park interspersed with groves of ilex, orange and almond trees, and gardens of stately palms. Truly no more magnificent prospect is to be beheld in all the world.

## IV

### THE HEART OF PALERMO

"I Quattro Canti"—"Il Corso"—Via Macqueda—Ancient City Gates—The Four Quarters of the City—Baroque Architecture—Saracenic-Norman Churches—San Cataldo—La Martorana.

THE summit of Monte Pellegrino affords a bird's-eye view of Palermo, Il Conco d' Oro, the sea-shore, and the surrounding mountains.

To know Palermo well, however—to enable one to study understandingly the extent, contour, and configuration of the city in detail, one must begin one's explorations by taking as a place of departure La Piazza Vigliena—difficult to find if one looks for it on any of the modern plans of the city, or inquires his way to it, calling it by that name; for the piazza is generally known—indeed is always spoken of by Palermitans—as "I Quattro Canti." The "Place of the Four Corners" is formed by the intersection of Corso Vittorio Emanuele and Via Macqueda, commonly called "Il Cassaro" and "La Strada Nuova," the principal thoroughfares of Palermo, the main arteries of travel, which are crowded all day long and far into the night by an interminable procession of vehicles and thronged by hosts of foot-passengers.

Standing in I Quattro Canti, facing northwest, look-

ing up Via Macqueda past the site of the old porta of the same name (the gateway itself was removed years ago to permit of the widening of the street), the vista through the new town is closed by Monte Gallo, rising at a distance of eight miles or more at the end of the valley of La Favorita. Facing about and looking through the old town down the Via Macqueda out beyond Porta San Antonio, Monte Grifone, five miles distant, marks the limit of La Pianura di Madonna della Grazia. To the northeast, down Il Corso, more than half a mile away, Porta Felice spans the street, and through its arch a glimpse is to be had of the Mediterranean. Sunlight transfigures the gateway of pearly gray stone, and it glows a golden yellow; the peep of blue water framed by the arch sparkles like a sapphire in an antique setting of beaten gold. Turning again and looking up Il Corso to the southwest, Porta Nuova shows in quaint design; also the golden frame of a picture, not of the sea this time, but of amethystine hills which rise beyond Il Conco d' Oro, the castle-crowned hills of Monreale.

I Quattro Canti is the "Heart of Palermo." Near it are the University, the public libraries, many churches, the courts of justice, numerous clubs and palaces, and the principal shops of the town. It is the most interesting point from which to observe the life of the city. Two streams of travel meet here, two brimming rivers of humanity. The current which ebbs and flows along the Via Macqueda is composed, especially in the afternoon, of the fashionable element of Palermo society, the people who keep carriages or hire "carrozze," patronize the grandest shops, visit the clubs and libraries, attend the courts or the University. Il Corso is more

commercial in its aspects, noticeable for the array of carts and drays, all wonderfully painted; for the smaller number of leisurely strollers, and particularly for the greater crowd of itinerant peddlers who fill the air with their cries. On La Via Macqueda one buys violets and confectionery; on Il Corso one bargains for fruit, or, if one is in search of them, cauliflowers, or even "finnochì" and garlic. If one is in quest of articles of luxury one looks for them on La Via; if household articles are required they are to be found on Il Corso, and it is to Il Corso one must resort if one desires to satisfy a craving for those necessities of life, books.

The Place of the Four Corners has the form of an octagon, and the four façades at the angles of the street are highly decorated in the baroque style with columns and statues. Not in Italy, but in Spain, can one see the like; in Seville, not in Florence, can one find similar schemes of ornamentation; and the crowd of passers-by who have known I Quattro Canti all their lives are, if not Sicilians, Spaniards—most unmistakably not Italian. And what wonder? Sicily was under Spanish influence for many generations; it has only been a part of Italy—if it can be called an integral part to-day—for one generation. There are statues, no doubt, of Victor Emanuel, first king of Italy, in Palermo; and Palermitans, loving his memory, have called a grand street by his name; but they have not forgotten the days of Spanish rule; indeed, it is greatly to be feared that they have only ceased to remember how badly they were governed by Spanish viceroy—among others, by Macqueda, who in 1600 decreed I Quattro Canti and La Via known by his name.

The southern façade, with its back to the Rione (Section) Palazzo Reale, is embellished with the statues of Spring, Charles V., and Santa Christina; that facing it, on the north side, and belonging to the Rione Castellamare, is adorned with effigies of Autumn, Philip III., and Santa Oliva; that to the east, Rione di Tribunali, with Winter, Philip IV., and Santa Agatha; that to the west, Rione di Monte-di-Pieta, with Summer, Philip II., and Santa Ninfa. The effigies of kings are not always appropriately to be placed near the statues of modest saints, and one cannot refrain from thinking that Santa Christina and her three companions might well be found in more congenial society. But there is an appropriateness—a world of suggestion—in the juxtaposition of the effigies of the four Spanish kings and the statues of the four seasons. In the time of Charles V.—without doing great injustice to the memory of his ancestors—Spain may be said to have been in the spring-time of her glory. Philip II. filled with his long reign the summer of her magnificence. Philip III. saw her splendor fade to the sear and yellow leaf, and Philip IV. (rescued from oblivion by the brush of Velasquez) brought decrepit old Spain to the beginning of the winter of her discontent.

The edifice which supports the façade on which is the statue of Santa Christina—by whose name the Rione Palazzo Reale is also known to churchmen—is La Chiesa di San Giuseppe di Teatini, a colossal structure in most extravagant baroque, begun in 1612 and inaugurated in 1645 by the viceroy, Marquis de Los Valez.

How any architect, having as models from which to draw inspiration for his art the superb Norman

cathedral of Monreale and the Palatine Chapel (which we had not yet seen, but were to behold and marvel at), could be guilty of the designs for this church of St. Joseph, it is hard to comprehend. The same may be said of all the churches of Palermo built in the seventeenth century. In all of them "the Jesuits' love of show and finery is exhibited in its greatest extravagance, not from design or plan, but by accident, as artist after artist, sculptor, carver, gilder, painter, or worker in marble chose to labor, without taste or rule, merely to display his own abilities."\* The exteriors of these baroque churches are invariably offensive to one's sense of the fitness of things architectural; they remind one somehow of elephants and hippopotami, clumsy, uncouth, heavy, and ungraceful—"flabby," if one may use the term. As you study these buildings closely you wonder how even a seventeenth-century bishop could wish to possess one of the gaudy monstrosities.

When we entered San Giuseppe we were not impressed with the beauty of the interior; the bad taste, the vulgar display of excessive ornamentation, oppressed us. What we could and did admire, however, and, although we visited the church many times during our stay in Palermo, never wearied of studying, was the superb collection of Sicilian marbles, plain and inlaid, of all colors, of all grains, of all degrees of beauty, with which the interior of the church is veneered from floor to roof. We found much to interest us in the details of the embellishment—inlaid altars, beautifully chiselled fonts and candelabra, cornices,

\* GÖTTE. *Italienische Reise*, Leipsic, page 42.

**PULPIT. CAPPELLA PALATINA, PALERMO**





panels, crucifixes, lintels, and door-posts; all delicately carved in variegated marbles, matched and joined together as nicely as the inlaid woodwork one sees at Sorrento or the delicate mosaics for which the artists of Florence are celebrated. Assuredly, the artificers who embellished the interior of the baroque churches in Palermo were as cunning to work in marble as their brethren who carved from oak the chancel of the cathedral at Seville or beautified the stalls in the choir of Il Duomo at Pisa with exquisite marquetry.

Beneath the nave of San Giuseppe is another church, dedicated to La Madonna della Provvidenza, and below that again is a chapel sacred to Santa Rosalia. In the latter we bought a ticket at a box-office, giving for it five centesimi, which was duly exchanged at a desk for two hazel-nuts wrapped in a paper on which were printed the directions for wisely and devoutly applying the sacred comestibles, the curative qualities of which were confidently advertised. From this incident may be gathered the idea that Sicilians are superstitious. No doubt ignorant Sicilians are very superstitious. Even Signor Crispi, a Sicilian born, is said to have inherited an implicit belief in charms, as witness the coral ornament in the shape of a horn which he is said to wear on his watch-chain as a protection against the "evil eye."

Near I Quattro Canti, in Via Macqueda, we stopped to examine a collection of ballads and cheap literature strung up along the wall of San Giuseppe. *Mutatis mutandis*, they were of that kind and quality with which Londoners and New-Yorkers, for instance, who pay attention to such light and trivial matters, are familiar, and with which the literary cravings of

the "street arabs" of the two cities are fed, perforce satisfied. It was interesting to discover that Jack Sheppard, Claude Duval, Red-Handed Dick the Scout of the Rockies, Barney the White Boy, Old Sledge the B'ar Hunter, found their prototypes in Francatrippa, Fra Diavolo, Antonio Cacciatori (Antonio the Lion-hunter), Botindari, Brigante di Santo Mauro, and the like. Many of the old "dime-novel" heroes were represented, disguised as Sicilians, having for the nonce discarded the costumes in which they had masqueraded for English and American readers. We penetrated the incognito of some of them, recognized others under their aliases, and enjoyed for a few moments all the pleasure experienced by a detective of Scotland Yard or the Central Office when he establishes the identity of a noted "crook." There were, however, some entirely respectable historical characters whom we were surprised to find in such questionable company. Cheek by jowl with Fra Diavolo was pious Æneas; Francatrippa's side partner was no less a personage than the "dog-eyed Ulysses." Hercules, slayer of the Nemean monster, touched shoulders with Antonio the Lion-hunter; while Dionysius of Syracuse, Pyrrhus of Epirus, and Ruggiero, Re di Sicilia, mingled with the crowd of more modern popular Sicilian celebrities, the bare mention of whose names sends a chill down the vertebræ of peaceful citizens and causes the hair of the conventional good boy to stand on end.

We crossed the Via Macqueda and entered the Piazza Pretoria, where stands the Palazzo Municipale, or della Città, commonly called "Il Municipio," the City Hall. In the centre of the square is a fountain

built in the style of the sixteenth century. From the variegated marble wall surrounding the basin animals of all kinds, carved in white marble, stretch out their necks as if trying to escape from the port-holes of a sinking ship. The sculptor understood his zoological modelling, but the general effect of the fountain is not pleasing, notwithstanding it is the "admiration of the whole island." In this square are also the old Palazzo Serradifalco, and the side entrance of the Church of Santa Catarina, which we entered and found to be gorgeously decorated in the baroque, a tasteless jumble of beautiful marbles, jaspers, and other rare stones, carved and inlaid, worthy of examination in detail, but most disappointing when studied as a scheme of interior decoration.

From the steps of the Church of Santa Catarina we looked across the Piazza di Teatro Bellini (named in honor of the Sicilian composer) and studied the picture presented by the Chapel of San Cataldo and the Church of Santa Maria del Ammiraglio, or La Martorana. Both edifices stand on a platform above the piazza, from which they are reached by a flight of stone steps. The smaller, begun in 1161 A. D., was finished twenty years later by William I., "The Good." Certain archæologists, however, assert that it was erected at an earlier date to serve as a Moorish mosque; and its rectangular form and three cupolas—the central one supported by four columns surmounted by arches—seem to lend plausibility to the statement. The larger Church of La Martorana, built in 1143 by George Antiochenus, the Admiral of Roger II., first Norman king of Sicily, is, in certain parts of it, one of the most remarkable of the existing monuments of

Arabo-Sicilian architecture of the twelfth century. The two buildings in their various parts illustrate many of the styles of architecture that have been at one time or another, during the last one thousand years, in vogue in Sicily. San Cataldo has low-pointed Moorish windows and an Arabian battlemented frieze, carved with texts from Al-Koran. The two lower stories of the Campanile of La Martorana have been preserved in their primitive beauty; the two upper stories, much more ornate, are probably of fourteenth-century workmanship. The façade of La Martorana facing the piazza is of early seventeenth-century design. The church has been much "restored," but is very beautiful still, and well worth the careful examination of antiquarians and the study of artists. When La Martorana was built, Greek and Arabic were the languages of the better class of Sicilians, as is to be learned from the act of endowment, written in those languages, a fact which serves to prove that Latin was not the language of the courtier and the clerk of Norman times. Upon entering La Martorana we came face to face with one of the most remarkable remains of Sicilian-Norman art, and by one glance at an ancient mosaic that shone as brightly as the day the workmen finished it we learned the story of Roger, descendant of Vikings, kinsman of William of the Strong Arm and Robert Guiscard, and ancestor of "the greatest man who reigned in Europe between the days of Julius Cæsar and Napoleon," namely, the Emperor Frederick II.\* Had Roger been a man less great than history warrants him to have been, the

\* E. A. FREEMAN. *Essay on Frederick II.*

mosaic representing him receiving the crown of the kingdom which he had carved out for himself with his own sword, from the hands of Christ Himself, would have savored of blasphemy. But when we know how Roger fought, how he governed, being every inch a king, and how he stood between his people (a people fortunate, if in nothing else, in that Roger conquered them) and the ambitions of the Papacy, that schemed and fought to put all men and all things under it—when we know all this, we realize that the artist who designed the mosaic had not presumed to flatter a man who acknowledged no over-lord but the Saviour of mankind.

It is a famous old story, the tale of the Normans in Sicily, a wonder-inspiring chronicle of great endeavor and grand achievement by world-compelling men. Inconsiderable ideas and hints of its glory have been gathered from fragments of documentary evidence, inaccessible to all but favored specialists who find admission to uncatalogued libraries of monasteries and palaces. Not a few *disjecta membra* of laws and public records have been rescued from oblivion by Amari, who has devoted years of his life to patient grubbing amid the mouldering archives of an almost forgotten epoch. We are indebted to him for the few but inspiring syllables we catch of the chronicles “of Roger and his Norman successors, whose story, more strange, because truer, than the legends of Æneas and Ulysses, more romantic than the tale of Charlemagne or of that other Norman, William the Conqueror,” is still untold in worthy English prose; a magnificent theme awaits a Motley, a Prescott, a Macaulay.

The sight of the two ancient sanctuaries, the Chapel of San Cataldo and the Church of La Martorana, with their divers styles of architecture, serves to carry the mind backward, as if on stepping-stones, from time present to time past, from the Sicily of to-day to the Sicily of the Norman, of the Saracen. The façade of La Martorana told its story of Spanish rule when Sicilian architects sought to reproduce the thought of the builders of the Cathedral in Seville and other Spanish cities. Certain arches borne on round columns and fragments of ornamentation suggested the chapels one sees in far-off Normandy or the Church of St. Bartholomew the Great in London; while the friezes carved with texts from Al-Koran, the rounded cupolas and windows with arches constructed of alternating red and white voussoirs recalled the mosque at Cordova, "that flower of Moslem architecture."

## LA CAPPELLA PALATINA

La Porta Nuova—The Royal Palace—King Roger's Chapel—Jewelled Walls—La Stanza di Ruggiero—Tapestries in Stone.

"THE true splendor of Palermo, that which makes the city one of the most glorious of the South, is to be sought in its churches: in the mosaics of the Cappella Palatina, founded by King Roger, the vast aisles and cloisters of Monreale, built by William the Good at the instance of his chancellor Matteo; in the Cathedral of Palermo, begun by Offamilio, and in the Martorana, dedicated by George the Admiral."\* It is true, therefore, that in Palermo one must look for "the noblest monuments of Norman days."†

La Martorana we had seen when we came upon it unexpectedly during our first ramble in the heart of the city. We had yet to see "the wonder of wonders," La Cappella Palatina, "la plus belle qui soit au monde, le plus surprenant bijou religieux rêvé par la pensée humaine et exécuté par des mains d'artiste."‡

On the highest eminence within the old walls of Palermo, facing the Piazza Vittorio—formerly called

\* J. ADDINGTON SYMONDS. *Italian Sketches*.

† SARAH ORNE JEWETT. *The Normans in Italy*.

‡ GUY DE MAUPASSANT. *La Vie Errante*.

Piano del Palazzo—there is a row of buildings as incongruous in architectural effect as can well be imagined. To the right, spanning Il Corso, stands La Porta Nuova, a triumphal arch erected on the site of Porta del Sole, in 1535 A.D., to commemorate the “joyous entrance” of Charles V. when he visited Palermo on his return from his expedition to Tunis. Some say that the plans for this gateway were drawn by Michael Angelo, others by Pietro Novelli, the Sicilian artist; but it is more probable that Gaspard Quercio, the constructor of the arch, also drew the designs for it. It is a quaint and picturesque specimen of sixteenth-century architecture, and was originally named Porta Austria by the Senate of Palermo; but the Palermitans, having no cause to love Charles V. or to honor his memory, insisted on renaming it Porta Nuova, and so it is called to-day. This gateway is connected with the Royal Palace by a corridor two stories in height, with balustrades surmounting its cornice. None of the buildings composing the palace are older than Norman times, although certain foundations laid in the days of the Saracen emirs are still in existence, and, possibly, some of the walls of the Saracenic nucleus around which Robert Guiscard, Count Roger, King Roger, William the Good, and Frederick II. built their towers and keeps.

This group of buildings presents to-day an appearance very different from its aspect in Norman times. Then, many towers and battlemented edifices occupied the space within the fortified enclosure. At present, none but La Torre Pisana—now called “Santa Ninfa”—remains to serve as a reminder of the age of chivalry. Santa Ninfa has been used for many

MONTREAL CATHEDRAL (INTERIOR)





years as an astronomical observatory, where, in 1790, Piazzi compiled his catalogues of the fixed stars, and where he discovered a planetoid to which, in honor of the ancient protectress of Sicily, he gave the name Ceres. In the times of Spanish viceroys the hand of the restorer was laid on so much of the Norman palace as had escaped demolition during the civil wars of the last half of the fourteenth century, when it was occupied in turn by both contending factions during their contests for possession of Palermo. In those evil days it was robbed of its ancient splendor, and the magnificent home of the Norman kings became unfit for the dwelling-place of royalty, so that Martin and Alfonzo of Aragon deserted it, preferring to lodge in a palace of the Chiaramonti. So ruthlessly was the work of destruction carried on that there remains of the original palace little else than La Torre Santa Ninfa, La Stanza di Ruggiero, and La Cappella Palatina.

On the ground now occupied by one of the least attractive edifices composing the Palazzo Reale once stood La Chiesa di Santa Maria la Pinta, built by Belisarius about the year 535 A.D. Pity it is that this old relic has been utterly destroyed. It was in the style of the very earliest Christian basilicas, and marked the period of transition from Greek temple to Christian church; but its proportions and plan are only to be guessed at by architects of to-day. The chapel of Belisarius gave place ages ago to less interesting halls and chambers.

Entering the main door of the palace, we found ourselves in a court-yard having an arcade of three openings in each face. We ascended a staircase to the

first floor, and, turning to the right, stood before the door of La Cappella Palatina, the royal chapel dedicated to St. Peter by Roger II. before the year 1132 A.D. The wall of the vestibule is embellished with mosaics of modern workmanship above a wainscoting of plates of white marble streaked with black, which at a short distance resembles satin hangings with many-colored borders of arabesque designs. In the early morning the sunlight falls upon the marble pavement within the portals of the only entrance to the chapel, a small door in the side wall at the angle farthest from the grand altar. When we stepped across the sill, the interior of the sanctuary was shrouded in darkness. As we stood in silence, wondering, we became conscious of dormant color-tones blending with deep, soft shadows, as mysterious, as entrancing as melodies heard from a distance through a calm night. Broad bands and beams of sunlight, falling obliquely athwart the darkness of the nave and chancel, were reflected upward from the marble pavement and illuminated the high-altar and the apse above it. This mysterious radiance revealed the figure of Christ, His right hand raised in the act of blessing, the attitude in which He is always represented in Norman-Sicilian mosaics. In His left hand He holds an open book, on the pages of which is the inscription, in Greek text: "I am the Light of the World." The figure is colossal, its bearing majestic, its aspect benign. The design, which is on a golden ground, is drawn in strong lines, and one marvels at the genius of the artist who has expressed so much by the use of means and materials so simple. Nevertheless, the grand presence fills the church ; all other ideas are subordinated to the

effect to be produced upon the minds and souls of men by the revelation of the face of the Son of God. And it is the face of a God! Passionless, calm, imperturbable—a grand ideal; not of the “Man of Sorrows”—the “Crucified One”—but the Son of God ascended and sitting on the right hand of the Father. So the old Byzantine artists represented the Saviour of mankind; and no face of Christ, no “Ecce Homo,” more perfectly realizes the divine character of God incarnate than the old Norman pictorial mosaic when illuminated by the light of the sun reflected from the marble pavement and jewelled walls of La Cappella Palatina.

Gradually, as the eye becomes accustomed to the contrast of deep shadows and sharply defined bands of light, other forms and faces grow out of the darkness, becoming visible through and beyond the golden sunbeams. The mosaics on the upper walls, the marble wainscoting, the inlaid floor, the polished columns, gleam and glisten, imparting to the atmosphere of the chapel a color quality of its own, as if it had absorbed and were suffused with rainbow hues, emanating from the precious material with which La Palatina is adorned and rendered glorious.

The interior, consisting of a nave, aisles, and triple apse, is one hundred and eight feet in length, including the eastern apse, and forty-two feet in width. Ten columns of Egyptian granite and Greek marble, sixteen feet in height, uphold Saracenic pointed and stilted arches, which in turn support walls encrusted with mosaics; and above all is a curiously carved wooden roof resembling the vault of a cavern of stalactites in the early stages of their formation. In modelling, the ceiling reminds one of that in the Sala

de los Abencerrages in the Alhambra, save that what is there pearly white is here bronzed, painted, and golden; that showing like whitest marble, this like jasper. Five marble steps lead to the choir, over which rises a dome seventy-five feet in height, solidly encrusted with mosaics, except where eight windows pierce the wall. All the floors of the chapel are covered with inlaid marble plates, and the walls above the "cipollino" wainscoting, in the aisles and above the capitals of the pillars in the nave, are overlaid with exquisite pictorial mosaics, in which large quantities of lapis lazuli, not to mention more precious stones, have been lavishly used. All the mosaics are on a golden ground, ornamented, radiant with Oriental colors, harmonious, splendid.

The Normans of France and England, with ready wit and admirable discretion, adapting themselves to their environment, indulged an inborn love of polychrome by using stained glass in the windows of their churches, which produced charming effects of rich and varied coloring. Glass windows are a necessity in the chill North-land. In the sunny South they can easily be spared; and the artists who enriched La Palatina and La Martorana secured no less beautiful color-effects than those of stained glass by well-studied blendings of the tints and colorings of the rare stones with which they adorned the interiors of these churches. So perfectly do the mosaics of La Palatina lend themselves to the intention of their makers, so softly do they reflect the light of day, that the edifice in which they are exclusively used to decorate all parts of the interior is illuminated by the same mysterious light which, falling from "irised panes," transforms

the naves and choirs of Northern cathedrals until they glow with all the tints of the bow of promise.

The pictorial mosaics in La Palatina, as do those in the Cathedral of Monreale, the paintings on the walls of Campo Santo, in Pisa, and the frescos by Giotto in the Arena Chapel in Padua, represent subjects drawn from the Old Testament, the life of Christ, and the lives of His Apostles, particularly from the life of St. Peter, who is said to have preached in the primitive church which he established on this same site when he was returning from Africa to Rome to meet his death on the Janiculum, where is now the Chapel of San Pietro in Montorio. On the right of the nave, by the steps leading to the choir, is a pulpit (a plain cube of red porphyry with a frieze of white marble encrusted with mosaics and inlaid with dainty geometrical patterns of the same material), borne aloft on four marble columns exquisitely engraved and delicately carved. The frank simplicity of the design and the unostentatious enriching of the work are most charming. To have highly embellished the rare material of which this piece is composed would be "to gild refined gold, to paint the lily." By the pulpit stands a very ancient carved white candelabrum fourteen feet in height. Some say King Roger imported it from the East, others that it was wrought by Norman-Sicilian artists. In either case it bears witness to the wonderful degree of perfection to which the art of carving in stone was carried in the days when it was chiselled from the solid block. Between the shadows of the nave and the brightness of the choir, almost directly above the steps leading to the latter, there hangs a large silver lamp, said to have

been also the gift of King Roger. It is a fine specimen of repoussé work, the great size and beauty of which testify to the wealth and munificence of the donor and to the skill of his silversmiths. But in the midst of the splendor of general effect the richness even of such details of adornment is overlooked.

La Cappella Palatina is hidden away in the mass of the other buildings appertaining to the Royal Palace. It is not a separate edifice, but a chamber in the midst of other halls and apartments. It has but one entrance from the open air, and the few short, broad, pointed windows, small in size, in the walls of the lower story are very probably of modern construction. Light admitted through the eight windows in the cupola falls with fine effect on masterpieces of mosaic and marble carvings. The nave is left in comparative darkness, and when the choir and chancel are illuminated by sunshine one looks from a darkened auditorium upon what may be likened to a stage, rendered bright by lights masked from the eye of the beholder. The spectacular effect is fine—theatrical perhaps, but the impression produced upon the mind of the spectator is deep and enduring. If a Gothic cathedral has been well likened to a "poem in stone," surely La Palatina may be compared to a melody of exquisite color-tones.

From the Chapel of King Roger we found our way to the upper stories of the Palazzo Reale, passing rapidly through certain royal apartments furnished perhaps by the last of the Bourbon kings of the Two Sicilies, certainly in extremely bad taste whenever or by whomsoever furnished. We came at length to La Stanza di Ruggiero, said to be in very truth the

apartment once occupied by King Roger himself. We have said that of all the edifices which composed the fortress-palace in Moslem or Norman times, there remains in this day and generation none but La Torre Pisana and La Cappella Palatina. Of all the wonderful interior decorations, the work of Byzantine, Saracenic, or Norman artists, there are no vestiges, save in the tower, where there is one apartment ornamented with mosaics which still retain their beauty of coloring and cling as firmly to the walls which they encrust as they did when they were first placed in position.

As the Normans of northern Europe employed tapestries to hide the bare walls of their palaces, so their kinsmen of the south of Europe made use of mosaics to decorate their chambers and halls. By fitting together cubes of agate, lapis lazuli, jasper, and other rare stones, King Roger's artists produced pictorial mosaics of wonderful beauty displaying no less ingenuity and skill in encrusting the walls of churches and state apartments than did the workmen of the North in weaving rare fabrics for the Norman kings of England; moreover, the mosaics are more artistic in design and execution than the Bayeux tapestries which Queen Matilda presented to her lord, William the Conqueror. The threads of Queen Matilda's tapestries have slowly mouldered until they are as easily to be broken as burned strands of flax or wool. Their colors have faded until in places one must guess at lines and imagine designs; but the mosaics in old Roger's room are as adamant in their composition, as fresh and dainty in their coloring, as they were when Roger first looked upon them.

## VI

### MONREALE

**King William the Good—The Cathedral of Santa Maria Nuova  
—The Basilica on Mount Royal—The Benedictine Clois-  
ters—Treasures of Architecture—Norman Splendor.**

**WILLIAM II., called "The Good," had long desired to build a church in honor of "The Holy Mother of God," but being at a loss to choose a site for the sanctuary, he prayed that the Madonna herself would indicate the place where it might please her to have a church and shrine. One day, returning from the chase, the good King reposed at Monreale, and in his sleep the Holy Virgin appeared and commanded him to build on that very spot the church which he purposed erecting in her honor. The King awoke and vowed to endow a cathedral which should surpass in magnificence all Sicilian churches. In 1174 he founded on Monreale—"The Royal Mount"—the Church of Santa Maria Nuova and the adjoining Benedictine monastery. In 1182, thanks to the assistance rendered him by his mother, Margaret of Aragon, the edifice, the splendor and magnificence of which redounded to the glory of William the Good, was finished and consecrated.**

**Around the cathedral and its chapter-houses there sprang up a considerable town, which to-day has a**

CLOISTERS, MONREALE

UN



population of sixteen or seventeen thousand. Monreale (pronounced *Mur-ri-a-li* by its Sicilian inhabitants) is four miles from Palermo. The highway thither, known as Corso Calatafimi, constructed in 1550 by the Spanish Viceroy Marc-Antonio Colonna, passes through gardens and villas, orange and lemon groves, olive plantations and vineyards, and then mounts the abrupt and rocky heights from which Monreale looks down upon an earthly paradise. Viceroy Colonna caused to be placed at intervals along the grand avenue fountains, surrounded by seats from which visitors and pilgrims to Monreale can enjoy the wonderful prospects which present themselves at every turn of the road.

The Cathedral of Monreale is situated at the entrance of the town, and beyond it, along the hill-side, the old houses stand in irregular rows, curiously mediæval in aspect and surroundings. The glimpses we caught up and down the streets impressed us strangely, as if in coming from Palermo we had gone backwards several centuries—if not indeed to King William's time, at least to the days when the Colonnas were viceroys and Sicily was a province of Old Spain.

The exterior of the cathedral is very simple, not to say plain, in appearance; the three apses at the east end are ornamented from top to bottom with tiers of small pillars and interlacing arches, the latter of alternate voussoirs of black and white stone. The edifice is in the shape of a Latin cross, the dimensions of which are variously stated in different guide-books and descriptions of the cathedral.\* We incline to the

\* Length, 334 feet; width, 131 feet.—BAEDEKER, *Southern Italy and*

belief that Baedeker is to be relied upon for the accurate measurements — viz, length, three hundred and thirty-four feet; width, one hundred and thirty-one feet.

Like all Sicilian basilicas, Monreale has between the towers an atrium, or portico, the front wall of which was originally decorated with a carved marble screen surmounted by an entablature of mosaics representing eight scenes from the life of the Virgin. The west portal is pointed; the pilasters at the sides are enriched with Greek scrolls and mosaics, and it has bronze doors, each of the two leaves of which is divided into twenty-four compartments containing low-reliefs of subjects taken from the Old and New Testaments, all executed by Bonannus civis Pisanus. This artist, according to Vasari, worked at Pisa with Gulielmo Tedesco, aided by whom he designed the doors of Il Duomo and “the famous leaning campanile, the marvel of all ages and of all men.” The bronze doors of the north portal of Monreale, by Barisano da Trani, are of later date. The portico, which extends the full length of the nave on the north side of the cathedral, was added by Alexander Farnese, Archbishop of Monreale, in 1586. The exterior of Monreale was never finished—it awaits embellishment and decoration; therefore it conveys no idea of the wonderful interior, which we entered from the Piazza del Duomo by a door in the side of the north aisle.

Monreale has a nave and two aisles; two rows of nine columns of Oriental granite support stilted and

*Sicily.* Length, 102 metres; width, 40 metres.—CARLO CLAUSEN, *Guide de Palermo*. Length, 85 metres; width, 24 metres.—GUSTAVE CLAUSSE, *Basiliques et Mosaïques*.

pointed arches, above which are nine windows in the clerestory; other windows admit light to the aisles. The choir and transept (the latter taking in the width of the aisles) form a Latin cross; the floor is here raised above that of the nave, and is reached by seven steps within a beautiful altar rail of carved marble. "The nave and aisles have apses at their eastern extremities; that of the nave, in which is the high altar, is of striking proportions and impressive size; the other two, less elevated, contain smaller altars. All the openings, the grand arches of the choir, the vaulting of the aisles, the windows and doors, are of the style adopted by Arab architects of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; but in the details of construction and ornamentation Monreale belongs to no one school of art." The splendid work of Norman-Sicilian artists is "Latin in its shape, Roman in its colonnade, Byzantine in its mosaics, Greek in its sculpture, Saracenic and Norman in its many mouldings" (and, we may add, baroque as to its restorations), exhibiting a "most curious combination of styles." \* The eighteen columns of Oriental granite are monoliths taken from Greek and Roman buildings. The antique capitals are ornamented with busts of Ceres and Proserpina, surrounded with foliage; the volutes are cornucopias with figures intermixed, and all these carvings were executed by the most skilful artists of, perhaps, the second century A. D. They are worthy the careful study of modern sculptors. One old Norman carving in another part of the building represents King William in the act of introducing the archbishop to the

\* HENRY KNIGHT, Esq., M.P. *The Normans in Sicily.*

Holy Virgin, a characteristically Norman way of asserting the divine right of heaven-anointed kings. The lower walls of both aisles and of the choir and apses are wainscoted with plates of cipollino surmounted by a Saracenic trefoil of rich marble on a ground of mosaics, which, as in the portico of La Palatina, has the appearance of white satin hangings with embroidered silken borders. All of the floors are of variegated and inlaid marbles, and above the wainscoting of cipollino all the walls, arches, arcades, and vaultings of aisles, nave and choir, transept and apses, are solidly incrustated with Byzantine mosaics on a golden ground. The wall surface so covered is, according to Baedeker, seventy thousand four hundred square feet.

Of all churches, St. Mark's in Venice alone can vie with Monreale in the extent of wall surface covered with mosaics; but in the quality of material used and in the skilful workmanship displayed by the makers of them, the mosaics of Monreale excel all but those in the cathedral of Cefalù even the mosaics in the Battistero degli Ortodossi in Ravenna being distinctly inferior.

The names of the architects of Monreale are unknown. Vasari attributes the fact "to the stupidity of the artists or to their contempt of fame." The evidence afforded by careful examination of the mosaics establishes the fact that King William intrusted the direction of the work of the embellishment to Greek—that is to say, Byzantine—artists, or to their Sicilian disciples, who succeeded in producing "the most gorgeous display of Byzantine decoration now in existence."

All the personages represented in the pictorial mo-

saics are in Byzantine costumes; Greek inscriptions appear everywhere. On the grand arch which separates the nave from the choir is the image of "Divine Wisdom," before which the archangels Michael and Gabriel prostrate themselves. But it is in the colossal half-length figure of Christ in the dome of the central apse that Byzantine art most distinctly asserts itself. The Redeemer—"Christ, the Creator"—appears surrounded by a vision of the Apocalypse and the Apostles; His countenance reminds one of the faces of colossal Greek or Egyptian statues—placid, majestic, godlike. He has a full beard, long, flowing hair—a cruciform nimbus proclaims the God; His form is enveloped in a blue mantle, partly opened, displaying a red tunic embroidered in gold. His right hand is raised to bless, His left holds an open book, in which appear the words in Greek text, "I am the Light of the World; whoso follows Me shall not walk in darkness." "Below the figure of the God-Creator sits the Holy Virgin on her throne, wrapped in a veil of dark blue, holding in her arms the Divine Infant clothed in a red tunic. The face of the Virgin is of a classic type, of which the original must be sought in Grecian sculpture."

The upper parts of the walls of the nave are covered with mosaics, representing scenes drawn from the Old Testament, from "The Creation" to "The Struggle of Jacob with the Angel," etc. One is impressed by the thought that from these same mosaics, or from copies of them, Michael Angelo may have drawn inspiration for certain of his designs on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. That this is likely will appear to any one who compares Michael Angelo's

"Separation of Light from Darkness," in the Sistine Chapel, with the "Separation of the Waters from the Land," the fourth of the series of mosaics in the nave of Monreale. Not only in conception are both representations similar, but the attitudes of the Creator in both are alike in composition. Nine subjects from Bible history illustrated by Michael Angelo, and especially "The Sacrifice of Noah," may have been suggested by the twelfth-century mosaics to the great artist who painted his wonderful masterpieces more than three hundred years later. We do not unduly insist on the idea that Michael Angelo copied, or even drew, inspiration from the works of the older artists who embellished Monreale; we merely wish to convey some idea of the kind and quality of designs executed by King William's craftsmen.

In the transept are subjects from the New Testament: "An Angel Announcing the Coming of Christ to Zacharias," "The Massacre of the Innocents," "Joseph's Dream," "The Flight into Egypt," "The Presentation in the Temple," "Jesus before the Doctors," "The Wedding at Cana," "The Baptism of Christ"; and on the walls of the choir, "The Temptation," "The Transfiguration," and "The Resurrection." In the two lateral apses are large tableaux of St. Peter and St. Paul, considered the most remarkable Sicilian mosaics of the thirteenth century.

In the midst of all this world of angels, archangels, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs, monks, and holy women, amid the portraits of saints and kings, two mosaics in the choir possess a particular historical interest. One, that on the right, above the archiepiscopal seat, represents William II. offering the Cathedral to the

Virgin ; the other, that on the left, above the royal throne, exhibits Christ in the act of placing the crown on King William's head, recalling the mosaic in La Martorana of Roger II. receiving the crown from the same Divine Over-lord. Following the example of his grandfather, William II., good son of the Church as he was, caused the fact to be emphasized in Monreale that the Norman kings of Sicily acknowledged no suzerainty but that of the Creator and Redeemer of the world. Proud and independent were these old Normans, whose ancestor Roger proclaimed himself "*Rex Divina Favente Clementia*" (King by the favor of Divine mercy), as his Norman-English contemporaries claimed to be "*Reges Dei Gratia*" (Kings by the Grace of God).

The ceiling of the nave is of wood, gabled with beams decorated in gold and painted in bright colors. It was constructed in 1811 to replace the old roof which was destroyed by fire, the expense of the restoration being borne by King Louis I. of Bavaria. In the south transept are two porphyry sarcophagi, containing the remains of William I. and William II. In the north aisles are the tombs of Queen Margaret of Aragon, mother of William the Good ; and those of Roger, Duke of Apulia, and of Henry, Prince of Capua, sons of William the Bad. Beneath an altar, also in the north aisle, is a sarcophagus containing the heart of St. Louis of France, whose body rests in the sanctuary of the French kings at St. Denis, near Paris. Louis IX., the last of the Crusaders, died in Tunis, of the plague, in 1270 A.D. Near that city there is a little town, Sidi-ben-Saïd, the "Village of the Saint," to-day an Arab village of peculiar sanctity, so sacred that no Christian is

allowed to sleep there. Strange as it may appear, the saint who gave its renown to Sidi-ben-Saïd was no less a personage than this same Louis, King of France. So widely were his virtues known by the Saracens whom he came to conquer that they wished to believe he died a true Moslem, and their descendants to-day maintain that the body of the Christian king lies in the mosque of the little town which his spiritual presence sanctifies. And when they are asked, "Was he not an unbeliever and a Frank?" the Arabs quote from Al-Koran: "Say unto the Christians that their God and our God is one."

The artists who embellished Monreale in the latter part of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries were in every way the equals in artistic abilities of the Italian masters who lived and worked a century later. Therefore, when we talk of "The Renaissance," we should not forget that long before Giotto had executed his wonderful frescos in the Arena Chapel at Padua, the Sicilian artists in the employ of William the Good had produced works of art that to-day challenge the wonder and admiration of critics.

"Other cathedrals may surpass that of Monreale in sublimity, simplicity, bulk, strength, or unity of plan. None can surpass it in the strange romance with which the memory of its many artificers invests it. None can exceed it in richness and glory, the gorgeousness of a thousand decorative elements." \*

Adjoining the cathedral is the Benedictine monastery, founded at the same time as the church. To-day,

\* J. ADDINGTON SYMONDS. *Italian Sketches.*

**CARVED CAPITALS. CLOISTERS OF MONREALE**

**CARVED CAPITALS. CLOISTERS OF MONREALE**



however, nothing remains of the original buildings but the cloisters, than which there are no more superb examples of twelfth-century architecture to be found anywhere in Europe. The court, which is one hundred and sixty-nine feet square, is surrounded by an arcade of small, pointed arches supported by coupled columns of white marble, with a group of four at each angle. There are twenty-five arches in each of the four sides, two hundred and sixteen richly sculptured pairs of columns in all, of which the capitals are of different patterns and the shafts elaborately adorned with an infinite variety of designs in mosaic and delicate carvings.

The word "cloisters" suggests to the mind familiar only with the monasteries of northern Europe the idea of a severe and sad retreat of ascetic beings who sought retirement from, and shunned all contact with, the world at large. A silent, gloomy place, a place of cells and shadows, where ghostly fathers passed years in solitude or in the joyless companionship of those, and only those, whose presence nerved them to banish the charm and sweetness of life and human society. The cloisters of Monreale impart no such impression to the mind. There all was light and joyous color, fair outlines, graceful ornament. Imagine a charming garden planted with shrubs and flowering vines laid out in parterres of exquisite greenery, where, in the shade of orange and citron trees, fountains played to cool the perfumed air. Imagine an acre of Eden—an Eveless Eden, it is true, but nevertheless a paradise, delicious, entrancing—such were the cloisters of Monreale! Or, to speak more correctly, such a place was the court-yard of the Benedictine monastery in the

good old days when monasteries were the dwelling-places of the Muses, when all that was best in all the arts was employed in the embellishment of the palaces of luxurious churchmen.

Wonderful as is Monreale, with all its treasures of architecture, to the completion of which all the arts have been laid under contribution, it is still more wonderful to remember that this superb creation of genius is to be discovered in Sicily. The world has paid little attention to the history of the Normans, who redeemed that island from the rule of the Moslems, or to the chronicles of a dynasty of kings, who in their day were the most powerful and richest, as they were the most enlightened, of sovereigns. Verily the history of Sicily is a sealed book, of which but a few scholars have guessed the contents. Forgetful of all this marvellous story, having paid little heed to the tale of Roger and his descendants, the traveller who sees for the first time the glories of Santa Maria Nuova, or beholds the still exquisite remains of the cloisters of St. Benedict, stands entranced, silently wondering at what, to his unprepared mind, seems to be unreal, impossible, a creation of enchantment wrought in an age of poetry and fable, rather than the work of patient, toiling men.

## VII

### IL DUOMO DI PALERMO

Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta — "Walter of the Mill"  
—Tombs of Norman Kings — King Roger II. — Emperor  
Henry VI. — Constance, "The Last of the D' Hautevilles"  
— Emperor Frederick II., "The Wonder of the World."

ON Il Corso Vittorio Emanuele, near Porta Nuova, is La Piazza del Duomo, to which Il Duomo di Palermo presents its right flank. This church of Santa Maria Assunta exhibits a curious mixture of architectural incongruities. The parts of the original Saracenic-Norman building which still remain are shapely, graceful, and charming in plan and detail; the modern additions and restorations are, in truth, abominable excrescences.

The cathedral, originally a Christian basilica, is said to have been erected in 592 A.D., on the foundations of an older pagan temple. The Arabs converted the basilica into a mosque. Gualterio Offamilio (Walter of the Mill), an Englishman whom William the Good created Archbishop of Palermo, having reconstructed and enlarged the edifice, reconsecrated it, in the year 1185 A.D., to the service of the Holy Virgin. In the seventeenth century a Neapolitan architect, displaying his flagrant bad taste, deformed the beautiful building by surmounting it with what he was pleased

to call an Italian cupola. The exterior of Il Duomo, when seen from a point of view from which all sight of the Neapolitan restorations and additions is cut off by other buildings, presents a harmonious combination of Arabic and Gothic architecture.

The lateral façades which flank the piazza are picturesque and interesting, while the front of the edifice, abutting on a narrow street, over which are thrown two arches to connect the sanctuary with the archiepiscopal palace, is plain and severe in design and ornamentation. The porches are enriched with three beautiful Gothic portals of the early fifteenth century. The south door was inserted at about the same time, and the highly ornamented portico, which was added about 1426 A.D., consists of pillars, pointed arches, and Greek details; one of the pillars probably belonged to a mosque, as it bears an inscription taken from Al-Koran. This south porch, which gives on the piazza, is the most highly ornamented part of the exterior of the cathedral, and on an old stone beneath its arches there is inscribed in large letters the proud device,

*"Prima Sedes Corona Regis et Regni Caput,"*

the title claimed by Palermo, in virtue of the fact that within its walls and in its cathedral, the Sicilian kings crowned themselves, or, as they always maintained, "received their crowns from Christ, whose legates they were."

The interior of the cathedral has been modernized throughout; that is to say, the walls and roof have been repaired, in many places entirely reconstructed; and except that the triple nave of the basilica and the choir are rendered impressive by their vastness and

correct proportions, there is little to charm the beholder, who vainly tries to imagine the grandeur of the edifice as it appeared in the old days of Norman magnificence.

The most remarkable objects of interest, the treasures of the cathedral, are the Tombs of the Kings. In the first two chapels at the right of the west door, there are four sarcophagi of porphyry similar in design, on bases of gray marble with raised canopies, two of which are of porphyry and two of white marble enriched with gilding and mosaics. These tombs contain the remains of Roger II. (second Duke of Apulia and first King of Sicily), who died in Palermo 1154 A.D.; of his daughter, the Empress Constance, who died in Palermo, 1198 A.D.; of the Emperor Henry VI., Roger's son-in-law; and of Henry's son, the Emperor Frederick II., who died in Apulia, 1250 A.D.

Beyond all peradventure, two of the sarcophagi contain the ashes of two of the most remarkable men who ever lived in any land or in any age: King Roger II., first King of Sicily, and his grandson, Frederick II., Emperor of Germany, King of Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Apulia, Burgundy, and Jerusalem—"Emperor of the World."

Roger when but a lad gave promise of the greatness which he afterwards more than fulfilled. When he became king he governed vigorously, cleared the highways of robbers, suppressed all attempts at rebellion, and established himself firmly in power. While still young he married Elvira, the daughter of Alfonzo, King of Castile. Shortly after his marriage he went to the assistance of his cousin, the Duke of Calabria, and assisted him in quelling a rebellion in one of his

provinces. In payment for the services rendered to him by Roger, the Duke of Calabria resigned all pretensions to any territory or authority in Sicily. When his cousin died leaving no direct heirs, Roger promptly claimed succession to his government. When Honorius II. declared that it was the right of the Holy See to decide who should inherit the dukedom, Roger opposed the pretensions of the Holy Father, whereupon the Pope excommunicated him and summoned the Barons of Apulia and Calabria to defend the rights of the successor of St. Peter. Nothing daunted, Roger collected a powerful army, composed of Saracens and Normans, and, presenting himself in southern Italy, offered battle to his enemies, who, however, declined to meet him in the field. Unable to hold their army together, the Barons again did homage to the Count, and the Pope was obliged to acquiesce, when Roger assumed the title of King of Sicily, and united in his person the sovereignty of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily.

Roger determined that he should be crowned at Palermo. Accordingly, on Christmas Day, 1130 A.D., the coronation of the first Norman King of Sicily took place in the cathedral, which had been but lately transformed from a mosque into a Christian church. Into the sacred edifice the King, armed cap-à-pie, rode on his war-charger, preceded by the Barons of Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria, arrayed in steel armor enriched with gold and silver. At the door of the cathedral Roger was met by nine archbishops, seventeen bishops, five abbots, and an innumerable crowd of priests. The haughty Norman proudly refused to allow the Papal legate to place the crown on his head, nor would he permit the Archbishop of Palermo (as

representative of the Pope) to stand on the highest step of the altar during the ceremonies, but compelled him to take his place one step below His Majesty. Roger, however, suffered the archbishop to anoint him, but, that done, the King, turning to the Prince of Capua, his first vassal, took the crown from him and placed it on his own head.\*

It is interesting to note that the ceremonials of the coronation, as well as the costumes of the participants, were copied from the court of Byzantium, "which was at that time considered the model of splendor and refinement, and to which the eyes of the Greek-Christian population of Sicily were at all times directed." Greek was the polite language of the day, but Roger and his Court spoke Norman-French, and made it fashionable.

The year following Roger's coronation the nobles of Apulia, once more taking up arms against their newly crowned king, appealed to Pope Innocent II., who put himself at the head of his troops and marched into Calabria. Roger captured the entire Papal army, and a Pope once more became the prisoner of a D'Hauteville.

Roger followed the example of his ancestors in the respect he showed His Holiness, but nevertheless wrung from Innocent II. a final acknowledgment of all his claims and the confirmation of his royal title;

\* In after-times, when the Norman kings were dead, the Norman dynasty extinct, certain chroniclers, better churchmen than historians, rewrote the story of Roger's coronation in order to create an entirely erroneous impression in the public mind regarding the claim of the Papacy to priority of right in matters pertaining to the government of Sicily.

and the Apulian Barons never revolted again. By this stroke Roger gained the Principality of Capua and the Duchy of Naples. He returned to Sicily, and addressed himself with rare wisdom and great diligence to the administration of the affairs of his kingdom. Taking, it is said, as his model the laws framed by William the Conqueror, Roger gave to Sicily a system of jurisprudence which, even to-day, commands the admiration of statesmen, who marvel at the learning and wisdom displayed in its compilation.

Roger was thrice married. His third wife, Beatrice, was the mother of Constance. His second wife, Alberia, had borne him five children, of whom only William survived. In 1154, in his fifty-ninth year, the first King of Sicily died. "Of him it has justly been said that he was one of the wisest, the most renowned, the most wealthy, the most fortunate princes of his time, an enlightened monarch who, by his own labor and by his own free will, presented his country with a code and constitution. Sicily was never so prosperous or glorious as under his reign. A tranquil realm and a full treasury were the legacies he bequeathed to his successor."

Then came "William the Bad" and "William the Good," good apparently by contrast chiefly; and Walter of the Mill, virtual regent and champion of Constance against Tancred, the illegitimate son of Roger, who was crowned at Palermo in 1189. Constance had married Henry VI., Emperor of Germany, who waged war on Tancred for the purpose of obtaining the crown of Sicily in the right of his wife's title. While he was preparing to defend his title Tancred died and Henry took possession of the kingdom of Sicily.

**PALERMO CATHEDRAL**





Henry VI., son of Frederick Barbarossa, was German by birth, German in mind and temperament, and he gave little care to his Sicilian possessions except to repress promptly all opposition to his rule. When he died his infant son Frederick was left to the care of the Empress Constance, who lived but a few years to guard the interests of her son; dying, she left him to the guardianship of Pope Innocent III.

Constance, the daughter of Roger and mother of Frederick (third in descent from the Norman squire Tancred d'Hauteville), transmitted to the princes of the race of Hohenstaufen the vigor of her Norman ancestry unweakened. To have been the daughter of such a king as Roger, the mother of such an emperor as Frederick, has rendered her name famous for all time.

"The times were troublous, and there were many claimants for the kingdom and provinces to which Frederick was legitimate heir; but he early displayed the abilities that proclaimed his greatness, and in time assumed the management of his own affairs, faced fate and fortune with a daring and a magnificent display of power that entitled him to be called, while still a beardless youth, 'The Wonder of the World.' By that title Matthew Paris, the English chronicler, more than once speaks of the emperor 'who drew on him the eyes of all men during the greater part of the former half of the thirteenth century, and whose name has ever since lived in history as that of the most wonderful man in a wonderful age.'"

Frederick was of Sicilian birth and education, a man of noble qualities of mind, learned in all the wisdom of Mohammedans and Christians of his time.

At his court in Palermo was given the first impulse to Italian literature. From his reign Dante dates the rise of Italian poetry.

“Warrior, statesman, law - giver, scholar, there was nothing in the compass of the political or intellectual world of his age which he failed to grasp. In an age of change, when in every corner of Europe and civilized Asia old kingdoms, nations, and systems were falling and new ones rising, Frederick was emphatically the man of change, the author of things new and unheard of—he was indeed ‘*stupor mundi et immutator mirabilis.*’ ” \*

\* E. A. FREEMAN. *Essay on Frederick II.*

## VIII

### TWO HISTORIC CHURCHES

San Giovanni degli Eremiti—La Chiesa dei Vespri—Campo di Santo Spirito—The War of the Sicilian Vespers in Pantomime—Giovanni di Procida.

NEAR the Royal Palace are the ruins of the chapel and cloisters of San Giovanni degli Eremiti. In a diploma bearing the date of 1148, Roger caused it to be recorded: "We grant to that monastery (Sancti Johannis), for the love of God, and the salvation of our mother and our father the great Count Roger I.; of the most serene Duke Robert Guiscard, our uncle, of most blessed memory; and also for the welfare of the soul of our consort, the Queen Elvira, of most blessed remembrance; and for the forgiveness of the sins of our children and all our relations alive or dead; and for the particular devotion which we bear to that monastery, which is situated under our own eyes and near to our own palace, which was built at our own expense, all those contiguous buildings which we have caused to be erected for this purpose."

It is possible that in constructing this chapel King Roger retained parts of an old mosque, for the present building has five round cupolas in form exactly like those which are to be seen in all Mohammedan countries. The shape of the church is that of an

Egyptian cross, or letter T, and it has three apses and three naves separated by marble columns; it is, however, in a sad condition of ruin, as are the cloisters adjoining it, and to-day vines and flowers grow luxuriantly where once were marble pavements; roses, oranges, and tropical vegetation occupy the courtyard where once upon a time grave monks invited their souls and breathed the air cooled by the water of living fountains. The church is empty, the cloisters deserted; nevertheless, San Giovanni degli Eremiti is one of the most picturesque and precious relics of the art of olden times.

We were met at the gate by the sole guardian of the place, a lively and entertaining gentleman, who welcomed us as if we were his oldest and dearest friends. He informed us, in pantomime, aided by perhaps a score of English words, that, although he spoke no language but his own, he possessed the art of making the gentlemen of all nations, and especially the ladies (with a sweeping bow to *la signora*) to understand everything. And, indeed, he succeeded in elucidating the subject of his morning's lecture in a most ingenious and amusing manner.

He spoke in Italian, but so distinctly, so loudly did he vociferate every word, we had little difficulty in gathering the drift and purport of his discourse. From time to time he "fired" at us (no feebler term will convey the idea) the very few words of English he knew how to use, and always illuminated his Italian phrases and sentences with artistic and elaborate pantomime. First, he led us to one side of the cloisters, and saying "monaci," which he translated "monco," he put his head to sleep on his right hand;

awakening, he fed himself, chewing ravenously entirely imaginary food ; and we understood perfectly that we were in what had anciently been the dormitories and refectories of the monks. He then assumed a solemn, grave, and woe-begone expression, such as Friar Tuck, or the Friar in "Reynard the Fox" might have assumed when wishing to seem devout ; gyrated his forefinger around the crown of his head, as if he were scalping himself with an invisible knife, rolled his eyes, crossed his arms upon his breast, and, moving slowly, with exaggerated show of dignity, crossed the court-yard as if leading a procession, and so gained the side-door of the chapel. There he dipped his finger into an imaginary basin and crossed himself before entering the building, which he called "La Chiesa," and wherein he made genuflexions before the altar towards the east. All this needed but little explanation. We who had followed him (scarcely able to repress our laughter) knew the purport of the show ; how the tonsured monks were wont to go in solemn procession from their cells to hold service in the Christian chapel.

As we stood by the door he returned to the court and informed us that, although he was not "Inglese," he had "make to understand." Then, ejaculating "Saraceni," he rearranged his expression and attitudes and gave us to understand that he was "Coperto di turbante"—covered with a turban, from which we inferred he was about to perform a Moorish comedy for our delectation. This he proceeded to do as follows : Taking off an invisible pair of slippers, he divested himself of an imaginary bournous and other vestments, and feigned to perform ablutions in a supposititious

tank; then (whether dripping or dowlassed we could not determine) he again entered the sanctuary, which he informed us was a "moschea." Turning to the east, he pronounced the word "Mecca," placed his thumbs in his ears, and, extending his fingers fan-fashion, waved them as he made obeisance towards the Orient.

Again we readily understood his meaning and knew that where Christian monks had worshipped Mohammedans had also come to pray. We also discovered that whereas the monks were solemn-looking, over-sad, and timorous creatures, who dared not so much as to raise their eyes to heaven, the followers of the Prophet were fierce, fanatical, truculent, and haughty personages, who bore themselves more like warriors than studious clerks and hollow-eyed ascetics.

Returning again to us, the versatile "custode" repeated his formula:

"Io faccio capire?"

To which we made reply, as in duty bound:

"Perfettamente, signore!"

Our custode then, to demonstrate how the enlarged Christian chapel, as we saw it, had been cleared of the walls of the moschea, paced off the dimensions of an inner parallelogram, ejaculating as he moved, "spazio"; when he stopped for an instant, "colonna o pilastro"; and when, alternately walking and stopping, he had completed the circuit of the chapel, we needed no plan to enable us to elucidate his meaning—that the inner enclosure had consisted of alternate spaces and columns which upheld the roof of the ancient building.

There is little to study or to describe in the ruins of

the interior of San Giovanni. They are mere reminiscences of the Moor and the Norman, of whose handiwork few vestiges remain except bare walls, Oriental cupolas, broken arches, and the shattered columns of the cloistered court-yard. But the ruined church and all its surroundings are wonderfully picturesque, savoring of poetry and romance. Therefore we lingered long amid the mass of greenery and flowers, wandering up and down the silent, moss-grown walks. When our guide left us to gather flowers for "la signora," the echoes of our own hushed and solemn voices came back to us from empty corridors and ruined halls like the murmur of ghostly fathers at prayer.

As we crossed the court-yard to leave the place, the custode detained us while he told us that near San Giovanni degli Eremiti was Il Campo di Santo Spirito, where was La Chiesa dei Vespri Siciliani.

To convey an adequate idea of his meaning, the custode resorted once more to pantomime. He pretended to ring the vesper-bell, fancied he saw crowds of people running towards him from all quarters, then, as if bewitched, or seized with homicidal mania, he fired guns, aiming them in all directions, stabbed and was stabbed, cut throats and had his throat cut in turn, closed his eyes to show that he, presumably a Frenchman, was asleep when seized and clubbed to death. He rang the supposititious bell again frantically, until we could fancy we heard its alarum booming through the outraged air, and fell to his horrid work once more, shouting:

"Mortè, morte! Detto di Franchy!" which we understood to mean "Death to the French."

In short, he enacted all the various forms of massa-

cre his ingenuity could invent, until he had figuratively strewn the precincts of San Giovanni with "molti corpi morti, molti cadaveri," and made an end only when he was able to inform us that "All the French had been massacred!"

We had become accustomed to exhibitions of Sicilian dumb-show, but in the art of "speaking by gestures" the custode of the ruins of San Giovanni degli Eremiti outdid any and all performers we had ever before wondered at.

*"Pugnat, ludit, amat, bacchatur, vertitur, astat,  
Illustrat verum, cuncta decore, replet;  
Tot linguæ, tot membra viro; mirabilis ars est  
Quæ fecit articulos, ore silente loqui."*

We applauded his latest and most artistic effort, and while bidding him good-bye assured him he had "make to understand."

About half a mile south of the Porta Santa Agatha, within sight of the Royal Palace and San Giovanni degli Eremiti, is an old cemetery, Il Campo di Santo Spirito, and within its walls are the remains of a Cistercian monastery, founded by Walter of the Mill in 1173. Grim, unholy legends haunt about the place. When the bell of this old church was tolled on the evening of Easter Tuesday, 1282 A.D., there began that massacre of the French known as the Sicilian Vespers.

The miserable Sicilians had suffered untold cruelties at the hands of the French during the spring of 1282 A.D., and there seemed to be no relief at hand. The island was held in subjection by the garrisons of forty-two royal castles and other military posts, es-

**SICILIAN (SARACEN TYPE)**





tablished in all the cities. All the great estates were held by French feudal lords, who treated the people as slaves. The foot of the stranger was on the neck of the people. Tax-gatherers exacted the uttermost farthing, and seized lands, houses, and crops to satisfy unpaid claims. Palermo, the ancient capital of the kingdom, most hated, most oppressed by its foreign governors, was daily the scene of outrages, arrests, and banishments. Herbert of Orleans, the viceroy of King Charles of Anjou, had his palace in Palermo, and was guarded night and day by a strong body of soldiery, who treated even the native nobility—the few that were left—with insolence. There seemed to be no hope of deliverance for a down-trodden and desperate people living in dread of outrages, the horror of which they dared not contemplate, and against the perpetration of which they were unable to protect themselves.

At a distance of half a mile from the southern wall of Palermo, where the plain slopes gently towards the Oreto, there was a church consecrated to the Holy Spirit. It stood in the midst of fields and gardens, and between it and the city there was a grand esplanade, which the citizens crossed and recrossed on their way to and from the sanctuary.

Easter Sunday, 1282 A.D., was an occasion for mourning rather than for celebrating the resurrection of the Saviour of the world. On Easter Tuesday this open space was crowded with people on their way to church or amusing themselves in the shade of the trees, when the followers of the French governor suddenly appeared among them and caused great alarm by their unusually bold and truculent behavior. Near by a young woman of rare beauty and of modest mien

was walking with her sweetheart. A French soldier made an insulting remark to her, which was resented by her escort. The captain of the guard cried out: "The ribald chatterers are armed, seeing that they dare to reply to the remark of a soldier," and, under the pretence of looking for a dagger, seized the young woman and attempted to put his hand in her bosom. The terrified girl fell fainting into the arms of her betrothed, who, frenzied with rage, shouted: "Oh, muoiamo, muoiamo, una volta, questi francesi!" (Let us kill, let us kill these French!), and he struck down the aggressor. The almost unarmed crowd rushed with desperate ferocity upon their well-armed opponents. If the struggle was brief, it was bloody and decisive. Great was the slaughter of the Sicilians, but greater still was the slaughter of the French. An historian laconically states: "There were two hundred Frenchmen, and of them two hundred were killed."

Rushing to the bell-tower, the infuriated crowd sounded the tocsin; others of the mob spread themselves throughout the city, crying, "Morte ai francesi!" and all the French upon whom hands were laid were promptly despatched by the daggers of the blood-thirsty Palermitans. All that day and all that night the massacre continued; palaces were stormed, guard-houses broken into; every corner of the city was searched, and everywhere, to the cry "Morte ai francesi!" the slaughter went on. Nor did the rage of the people abate until two thousand French were destroyed. Not only did the mob kill the French residents of the city, but it slew all Sicilians, men and women, who had in any way connected themselves with the French people. When a suspect fell

into the hands of the mob and protested that he was not French, but in very truth a good Sicilian, he was commanded, with a sword at his throat, to pronounce the word "Ciciri," and according as he sounded the "c" and put the accent on one or other of the syllables he was declared to be, or not to be, French, and killed or spared. Woe to the man or woman, old or young, or child, who failed to pronounce correctly this Parlermitan shibboleth.

From Palermo a sudden outburst of popular fury was propagated and spread over Sicily and into every corner of it, and the massacre continued for days, until hardly a person of French birth or extraction was left alive in the whole island. The people everywhere flew to arms. "Death to the French!" was everywhere the watchword, and by their own unaided exertions, under the leadership of Ruggero Loria and Alaimo da Lentini, the islanders freed themselves at last from the hateful tyranny of the French. It is true that the War of the Vespers continued for years, but the dominion of the French in Sicily had passed away forever.

## **IX**

### **SARACENIC QUARTERS OF PALERMO**

**Rione Castellamare — Rione Palazzo Reale — The Slums of Palermo — " Rag Fair " — Albergheria — A Victim of the Triple Alliance.**

**IF Il Corso and La Via Macqueda recall the streets in certain cities in southern Spain, there are thoroughfares in Palermo that remind observant travellers of streets in Tangier, Algiers, and other north African cities. There are to-day districts in Palermo that appropriately may be called the Saracen quarters of the town. Such are La Via Monteleone and its neighborhood, in the heart of the northeastern section, the Rione Castellamare; and La Via Albergheria and La Via Bosco, which intersect the Rione Palazzo Reale in the southwestern quarter of the city. These streets, so un-European, so Oriental in general appearance and in detail, are the resort of a teeming population of paupers who live in quaint, old, dilapidated dwellings, packed away, to use an illustration appropriate to things Sicilian, "like sardines in boxes." The life of these people is mostly out-of-doors, or at the doors of their dark, unfurnished, cave-like houses, and, except during the wettest weather, untold multitudes swarm in the lanes and by-ways night and day and throng the narrow streets**

We spent much time, not in the idle occupation known as "slumming," but in appeasing a real desire to know something of the condition of life of the Sicilian poor. We made many expeditions through the stews and purlieus of Palermo by night and by day. In this way we were able to form our opinions by what we ourselves saw, and we venture to state that, so far as the municipal authorities are concerned, there is little to desire in the matter of cleaning the back streets and by-lanes of those districts of the city in which multitudes of human beings are crowded together in their wretched dwellings. One may search in vain, it is true, for any evidence of that comfortable arrangement or wholesome fitting and furnishing of tenements which are supposed to be necessary to the home-life of even the poorest of the poor; and the people who live in the cheerless dwellings are not clean. In what city does one find clean people living in tumble-down rookeries and dilapidated tenements? Curious are the sights that meet the eye, the sounds that fall upon the ear of the visitor as he threads his way through the dingy, melancholy purlieus of the Rione Albergheria. He is constantly reminded that the people, so like Saracens in aspect, are not indeed followers of the Prophet, for at almost every corner of the streets he beholds shrines of the Madonna and the saints; and in the darkest court-yards and narrowest lanes are other shrines, before which little oil-lamps twinkle like stars in the almost constant night that lurks in the shadows of these hideous holes and corners. Some of the streets are so narrow that the people in the upper stories of the houses, which lean tottering over the pavement and seem threatening to

fall upon the heads of passers-by, can almost shake hands across the chasm. Narrow as they are, these streets are the highways of a large traffic. On each side of them are all descriptions of shops and the stands of dealers in cheap articles of food, clothing, and household furniture, such as supply the wants of people who have little money to spend in making themselves comfortable.

Passing and repassing at all times of the day, vociferating in reply to the shouts of the vendors, laughing, talking, screaming, scolding with a volubility that passes all belief, there ebbs and flows a tide of customers, of idlers, of busy people, the majority of them in rags, but more or less picturesque and interesting in their tatters. And we repeat, the majority of people are Asiatic, not European, in aspect, action, and manner of doing things.

Here and there are to be seen women with a dozen or two chickens tied by their legs to a cord suspended from the neck of the vendor. These poultry-sellers cry their wares in tones shrill enough to drown the cackling of live birds that loudly protest against their captivity. We watched a transaction in poultry. The negotiation was carried on with such earnestness, not to say violence of voice and manner, that an uninitiated passer-by might fancy the parties engaged in it were accusing one another of crimes unmentionable. They stood close to one another, the would-be purchaser carefully examining and feeling what little meat there was on the bones of a decidedly old and time-worn hen that had in all probability long since laid her last egg. The discussion as to the merits of the fowl and the price thereof was long, exceedingly

vociferous, and seemed likely to end in blows. Finally, having come to an arrangement with the dealer, the customer received the hen she had selected, paid the price, and, taking her merchandise, moved off down the street. Undoubtedly, with an early dinner in view, she began plucking the live bird, an operation against which the unlucky biped protested clamorously, as, handful by handful, the feathers were torn from its emaciated carcass and given to the winds.

There are many cobblers to be seen at work, seated on their benches in front of their shops mending shoes; and many tailors, whose principal business seemed to be the patching of garments that often had been patched and mended. The people who live in these purlieus never seem to be able to purchase all the parts of a new outfit contemporaneously, but eke out the new with old rags that in more prosperous countries would long since have found their way to paper-mills.

In front of the dwelling-houses women boil ragged clothes in copper kettles placed over charcoal furnaces of about the size of an ordinary beer-keg. This is a frequent sight on any fair day of the week, but particularly on Monday, which is wash-day in Palermo, as it is in the rest of the world. On that day the narrow thoroughfares present a most curious appearance, for from every window, from side to side of the streets, are suspended the tatters of so many households that it is almost impossible to look up and catch anywhere a glimpse of the sky. Of course this exhibition of weekly washing is only made by those people who can afford to have two coats, or whatever it may be, apiece. Thousands upon thousands of people of Palermo cannot afford to spend a day in bed, and there-

fore it may be presumed that their rags and tatters are rarely, if ever, treated to soap and water.

In the market-places itinerant menders of all imaginable things are to be seen piecing, patching, altering, refitting all kinds of articles hardly worth a moment's trouble to keep them longer in use, and wherever there is one busy person, around him or her there gathers an audience of listless spectators, who lounge and loiter. Everybody with anything to do is intently watched by a dozen or more idle people who have nothing to do because they cannot find or do not seek employment.

At the butcher-stalls there is displayed a most unattractive supply of flesh of one sort or another, principally of goats; but it is only the better class of people, those who can afford to have their clothing washed weekly, that venture to inquire the price even of goat's meat. To eight-tenths of the people of Sicily animal food is an untasted luxury. One corner of the market-place is devoted to fish-mongers, and large and varied is the assortment of the finny tribe they offer to their customers: small jars of tiny anchovies; larger anchovies in larger jars; anchovies grown to be sardines—boxes, buckets, barrels filled with these; and overgrown sardines, resembling small herring, fresh, salted, or preserved in oil. The seas about Sicily swarm with these fish, which correspond to the whitebait, sprats, and pilchards of northern Europe. Mackerel there are in abundance, and many fish known and unknown to Englishmen and Americans. Oysters of an appearance and kind which we, over-fastidious perhaps, never were tempted to eat unless they were served at our hotel or opened for us

**"STREET ARABS"**





by the boatmen who dredged them from the sea. But the principal staple of sea-food is a slimy, grewsome-looking monster, the polyp, called "squid" by Newfoundland fishermen, who use them for bait. More uninviting, more disgusting-looking objects than these same polyps, the small-fry of Victor Hugo's devil-fish, one can hardly imagine; and yet they are eagerly sought for by poor Sicilians, who count themselves fortunate if—on Friday at least, if not oftener—they may make a meal of a mess from which a New York 'longshoreman would turn away with loathing.

Among the vegetables displayed upon the stands are surprising quantities of cauliflowers, larger and coarser than those grown in Northern Europe, of all shades—bright green, pink, red and purple, yellow and golden. At a distance they look like huge chrysanthemums, and lend vivid color to the market-place filled with people and things dressed and painted in the gayest hues, all combining, with the gaudy carts and the gay harnesses of the asses that draw them, to form a multicolored kaleidoscopic scene, whereof we shall not attempt to describe the polychrome, for the reason that it is indescribable, almost unimaginable.

Many booths there are at which are sold cheap trinkets and "brummagem" ornamentations intended to be hung up in churches, in commemoration of miraculous cures vouchsafed by saints who have heard the petitions and regarded the vows of their devotees. There are countless carts containing skins of wine, and stands where various kinds of "be-vete" are sold—soda-water, herb-teas, and "bevande medicinale," a sort of root-beer. "Readers of books" sit surrounded by eager people listening to expositions

of the cheap literature of the day. "Letter-writers" there are also who for five soldi indite epistles for the people who know not how to write, or make up the simple accounts of the costermongers. Around the fountains there is always a host of womankind, who bear upon their shoulders amphoræ of the same shape and material as those to be seen in the collections of Greek antiquities. Occasionally, as we watched these throngs, we beheld a young Palermitana of fair face and graceful figure, who, when she raised her filled amphora to her shoulder, unconsciously posed in a statuesque attitude, a subject for a sculptor or an artist, a bit of old Greek art in the wilderness of modern conventionalities, charming in comparison with the worn and wearied matrons so intent upon the affairs of to-day, so wrapped up in thoughts of the things of this work-a-day world and oppressed by its cares. When the pleasing figure vanished there was little to attract one in the sight of the market-place, with its crowd of toiling, struggling, ragged, half-starved humanity. The cries, the smells, of the market-places in the Rione Castellamare, who can describe them?

In the Rione Palazzo Reale the appearance of the streets and the people is no less Saracenic in aspect than those of the Rione della Kalsa. There are many churches in this part of the town, said to have been erected on the foundations of old mosques; for the district known as the "Albergheria" was in ancient times the most crowded quarter of the Palermo of the Emirs. From the Piazza del Carmine, an irregular open place, there radiate in all directions lanes, alleys, and by-ways, narrow, dark, and mysterious passages, between the tottering houses. It is worth while

sometimes to walk through these places for the sake of obtaining bits of local color. Women stand in the ivory-black shadows of doorways, which bring out in strong relief the brilliant hues of their frocks and the brightness of their eyes. Many of the younger women display good taste in arranging the cheap materials they use in making their modest toilet. All of them—girls, young women and old—hood themselves with their shawls, which they clasp beneath their chins, partly covering their faces. Groups of men and women squat in dark doorways, around shallow brass platters containing a handful of glowing charcoal over which they cook their food and in cold weather attempt to warm their frosty hands.

Near La Chiesa del Carmine we beheld the not unusual spectacle of a young recruit, newly drafted, taking leave of his family. He was a good-looking boy, but seemed hardly to be of an age to fit him for service in the army. He was in uniform, had his knapsack packed, and was ready to depart, but he stood in the middle of the street blubbering as he related his tale of woe to his younger sisters and brothers, and perhaps cousins, for there were at least ten or twelve small children around him, some of whom stood, others knelt, upon the pavement, all of them weeping as if their hearts would break. The boy's mother, her eyes red, her hair dishevelled, was delivering a tirade (presumably against the iniquity of the military system of the kingdom) to a dozen or more of her friends, who gave their most unequivocal, vociferous assent to all her propositions and complaints. The lane was full of women ; there were a few men, and these latter were very old, too old to work. The

windows and doors of the houses were occupied by other women, all talking, all gesticulating, all very angry. Many of them had reason, no doubt, to remember with anything but pleasure and patriotic joy the day when their sons or brothers, sweethearts or husbands, had been taken away from them to serve their time in the royal army. When the young recruit was motioned to come away by the sergeant (a good-natured fellow, who had permitted his charge to halt on his way to the railway station), the scene in the lane beggared description. The children gave loud voice to their sorrow; the mother frantically kissed her boy, his face, his hands, his clothing, and, falling to the ground, kissed his feet. Then, rising to her knees, she clinched both hands, and, raising them to heaven, seemed to be delivering curses at the sergeant and at all above him set in authority who had lot or interest in taking her son from her. Leaping to her feet in a paroxysm of fury, she crossed herself, spat upon the tips of her fingers, and, stooping, made the sign of a cross upon the pavement, upon which she threw herself and lay at full length, weeping hysterically. Her women friends gathered around her, raised her from the ground, and led her into her wretched house. The children, bellowing and gesticulating, followed the young recruit to the corner of the street, whence they shrieked a last farewell to the young soldier, who trudged beside the sergeant, weeping aloud. So far as we were witnesses to the incident it closed then and there, and little is suggested by this recital if not the fact that undoubtedly the Triple Alliance is very unpopular with that class of Sicilians from which are drafted the common soldiers who serve in the Italian army.

## X

### IN PALERMO

**The Genius of Palermo — La Piazza della Rivoluzione — La Chiesa della Gangia — Volfango Goethe — La Villa Giulia — L' Orto Botanico — La Via Borgo — Le Belle Donne — Interesting Sights — "The Sailors' Rest" — La Cala — Il Foro Italico.**

FROM La Porta Garibaldi, through which "The Liberator" entered when he captured Palermo, La Via Garibaldi leads to La Piazza della Rivoluzione, in the heart of the southeastern quarter of the city. This open space was anciently known as *Forum Vetus*. "Fiera Vecchia" it was called in later times.

On the 12th of January, 1848, and again on the 27th of March, 1850, La Piazza della Rivoluzione was the scene of revolts against the tyranny of the Bourbons, and in the middle of the triangular piazza there stands a statue of the Genius of Palermo, which, without possessing any artistic merit, is dear to the hearts of the people. In 1860 the followers of Garibaldi, having discovered this statue where it had been concealed by Maniscalco (of infamous memory), the police agent of King Bomba, replaced it on its pedestal, where it remains safe and secure until this day, a reminder of the grand period of "Sicilian Regeneration."

Not far from La Piazza della Rivoluzione, on La Via

Alloro, stands La Chiesa della Gangia, built in 1430, and dedicated to Santa Maria degli Angeli. The exterior of this church is in the style of the architecture of the fifteenth century, but it has been spoiled by reckless restoration. Its interior, however, preserves its ancient form and construction, notwithstanding the fact that it was much damaged by a fire that threatened to destroy the building two centuries ago. The roof is in wood, and is an interesting study, reminding one of the old Norman roofs of the cathedrals of Cefalù and Monreale, from which it was evidently copied. But it is not architectural beauty nor adornment that makes La Gangia one of the most interesting buildings in Palermo.

On the 4th of April, 1860, an attempt was made by numerous citizens, headed by Francesco Riso, who raised the standard of revolution, to free the city from the detested Neapolitans. The outbreak was promptly suppressed; Riso was mortally wounded, and his companions took refuge in the church and adjoining cloisters, where certain of them were captured by the Bourbon soldiery. Two of the revolutionists, Filippo Patti and Gaspari Bivona, escaped and concealed themselves in the crypt of the church, where they remained hidden for five days. Their place of refuge was known to certain of their friends, who, eluding the vigilance of the sentries, communicated with the refugees, and, while supplying them with food, assured them that trusty citizens would find some means of rescuing them from their perilous situation. Patti and Bivona loosened two or three of the large stones in the walls of the crypt, but left them in place ready to be pushed out when the signal to attempt their escape was

given. One evening, as the friends of the prisoners had planned, a large load of hay was driven through La Via Alloro. So great a crowd of people gathered around the wagon that the sentries were unable to see up and down the street. At the right moment the two refugees pushed out the loosened stones, and, crawling through the hole, gained the street and lost themselves in the crowd of their fellow-patriots, who, in silence, made way for them as Patti and Bivona fled for their lives and liberty. The hole through which the two patriots made their escape from the crypt is called in Sicilian dialect "Il Bucu dellu Salvezzu,"\* and has been closed by a block of marble, on which there is an inscription commemorating the rescue of the two revolutionists.

Not far from La Chiesa della Gangia, in the centre of a large and handsome square surrounded by sightly buildings of modern construction, there is a monument to the memory of those companions of Patti and Bivona who were massacred after their capture in La Gangia. An inscription recites that the obelisk, which was erected by the municipality of Palermo, "In memory of the thirteen victims of April 4, 1860, was dedicated on April 4, 1883." There is also a tablet commemorating the heroism of Giovanni Riso, the father of Francesco; and on the other three sides are the names of his twelve unfortunate fellow-conspirators, who, after their capture in La Gangia, "were brought to this place and shot down by repeated volleys by the troops of King Bomba."

At the foot of Il Corso Vittorio Emanuele, near

\* The mouth of safety.

Porta Felice, there stands a spacious mansion, in the front wall of which is a marble tablet containing an inscription which will be read with interest by all lovers of poetry and letters: "Giovanni Volfango Goethe, durante il soggiorno a Palermo nel 1789, dimoro in questa casa—allora publica albergo." \*

The apartment which the great poet occupied has been dismantled and changed since he lived in it. "The endless variety of views" from the windows and balconies, which so delighted his eye and charmed his artistic spirit, have been shut out by surrounding buildings erected in these later times. The house itself is still attractive in its situation and arrangements; but times have changed, and it is no longer one of the fashionable resorts of the city. The old buildings near it, once occupied by nobility, are now turned into lodging-houses and the offices of important mercantile firms.

Not far from the Goethe house, at the foot of La Via Lincoln, close by the sea, there is the garden of La Flora, otherwise known as La Villa Giulia, a large square enclosed in handsome railings, and recently enlarged and beautified.

In this fair park Goethe spent many delightful hours. "It is the most wonderful place in the world," he writes in April, 1787; "regularly laid out by art, it looks like a fairyland planted but a short time ago; it nevertheless transports you into ancient times." And then he informs us that he hastened to purchase a "Homer" and read the pages familiar to him. Here

\* "In this inn, then one of the principal houses of public entertainment in Palermo, Goethe resided during his sojourn in the city in the year 1789."

**S. GIOVANNI DEGLI EREMITI. PALERMO**



he resorted daily, in fine weather, and he paints a charming picture when he describes how he sat in the garden, in the shade of grand trees, in the midst of flowers, and over a glass of Sicilian wine made an impromptu translation of the lines of Homer for the benefit of his friend and travelling companion, Kniep, the artist, whom he had induced to accompany him to Sicily. It is a charming bit of personal narrative. Pity it is that some great artist has not conceived the idea of transferring it to canvas.

From La Piazza Quattro-Venti Consolazione to La Cala, La Via Borgo extends along the harbor. A stroll on this wide esplanade will well repay observant travellers who delight in lively street scenes and crowds of active people. On La Via Borgo, where the houses face the sea, all is activity, noise, strange cries, color, and, be it noted, odors, not of dirt however, but of comestibles, cook-shops, fish-markets, and the like. In baker-shops one sees queer-shaped loaves suggestive of the legless bodies of mulatto babies, round "twists," solidified whirlpools in dough; and in these shops, the dark interiors of which resemble caves, women stand before ovens baking bread—oftentimes handsome women—whose faces, lighted by the glow of charcoal fires, are worthy of more than passing glances, especially as "le belle donne" of La Via Borgo do not resent admiration. In the butcher-shops there are to be seen much kid's meat, with the skin and hair still adhering to it, and sausages of all degrees of convolution and entanglement, various hashes and minces, bladders of blood-puddings, black puddings and white, and some of ghastly blue; all of them appetite-destroying, grewsome articles, reminding one

of Scotch haggis and the hideous puddings one sees in Germany and other parts of continental Europe.

In the fruit-shops are oranges and lemons, green and golden; prickly pears, mottled, white, scarlet, crimson, and yellow, as curiously variegated as the ripe cocoa-pods one sees in the West Indies; and bunches of tomatoes, peppers, egg-plants, melons, hung on the walls to dry. In cheese-shops are wonderful shapes and designs of *cacio cavallo*, odoriferous, pungent, biting, the cheese of the country, without which no mess of macaroni can be prepared to suit the Sicilian palates. Over a wine-shop we noticed a curious motto, "*Sincherò il trovi sempre, e di valore, e avrai sana, la verità, e lieto di cuore,*" which may be paraphrased, "In wine are sincerity, valor, health, truth, and lightness of heart."

But most curious of all exhibitions are those afforded by the shops where "pasta" is sold; with lambrequins of macaroni—spaghetti—suspended on rods in front of the buildings and across doorways, like Japanese portières, for in such fashion sellers of pasta exhibit their wares, as the cheap-jacks of Chatham Square display dry goods and second-hand clothing. In fact, everywhere there are incredible quantities of macaroni hung in this strange fashion on the walls, along the streets, in vacant lots, on the roofs of buildings, in court-yards, and from window to window across narrow lanes; everywhere macaroni hanging in the open air, in the sunlight, to be rained upon, to be blown upon by the odor and dust-laden winds, reeking, possibly, with bacilli; macaroni hung up carelessly where it must catch the dust, the infection of a thickly populated and not too clean neighborhood;

macaroni drying by the shore, among the fishing-boats, where fishermen lounge and smoke, where boys play tag and other games, dodging under and around the fringes of the yellow and white pasta. And yet this favorite article of food is not stolen, although it is left out at night, and is apparently unguarded. A strange fact; for we are told that the people are hungry, starving, and some travellers would persuade us that Sicilians are characteristically dishonest, stealing whatever they can lay their hands on. Certainly, in the matter of macaroni, a chronically hungry people may plead "not guilty" to the indictment.

From a narrow alley, where the macaroni portières hung aloft like "flies" above the stage in a theatre, a company of priests in white cotton robes emerged upon La Via Borgo, carrying the Host around a building in which a death had occurred. The eldest priest walked under an umbrella held aloft by one of his younger assistants, six small boys carrying lanterns, and one large boy ringing a bell preceding him. The candles twinkled, the priest intoned, the bell rang, in vain. Nobody cared, nobody paid attention to the procession, being diverted by the organ-grinders, of whom there were many, playing airs so familiar to us that we could imagine the musicians and their organs had been across the Atlantic and were come home again to delight the Sicilians with rehearsals of the latest "minstrel songs" of the Western World. Indeed, we fancied that we recognized two grinders and their organ—they seemed to form a familiar group in our memory. It is not impossible that they had been in New York, for they were playing an air which all the little boys on Manhattan Island whistle most

excruciatingly. There were children dancing to the music of the organs, and, farcical beyond all expression, a donkey braying thereat. The combination of sounds was a little more than our ears could stand, and we hastened our footsteps to escape the cacophony. Nevertheless, if the children of men may dance to the sound of a hurdy-gurdy, why may not an ass bray? Every one to his taste!

Of unceasing interest and endless change are the scenes along La Via Borgo, where, at the edge of the sea-wall, every two hundred feet are movable sentry-boxes, alternately green and yellow, in which stand carabinieri in gray-and-scarlet uniforms. The sentinels remain motionless in the shadow of their sentry-boxes (one is reminded of soldier-crabs in their stolen shells), and keep their eyes on the groups of idlers, boatmen, fishermen lounging about; for, be it remembered, at the time of which we are writing Sicily was under military rule, and the government had quartered a large contingent of troops in Palermo for the purpose of applying a leaden ounce of prevention at the very beginning of social disorders.

Along the sea-wall were hundreds of fishing-boats, but we need not dwell upon the quality of their decorations—like all other things, they were painted in Sicilian style; boats setting out for and returning from the fishing-banks; boatmen with fish for sale; men mending their nets, picturesque-looking fellows, so unlike, indeed without the faintest resemblance to, the fishermen one sees at Naples—not even remotely Italian in aspect and manner, but more like Moors and Berbers are these watermen of La Via Borgo. It is said that the denizens of this neighborhood use many

Arabic words and are more Saracen than Italian, more Arabic than Latin, in their manners and customs, the most Oriental of all Sicilians.

Our attention was called to a very handsome priest standing in the sunlight which shone into the vestibule of the Church of Santa Lucia. His figure stood out against an ivory-black background of interior shadow. He was good-looking and picturesque, and was gazing with evident admiration at a pretty woman who sat on the door-step of a well-restored, prosperous-looking house across the street. She was a busy woman, neatly clad, and sang as she knitted to a toddling baby that frolicked and played hide-and-seek, now running into the shadow of the doorway to come again into the sunlight, like a humming-bird flitting near its nest. Over the door of the baby's home was a sign in good, plain, satisfactory English—"Sailors' Rest"—and the house was the neatest, cleanest, and most comfortable building in the neighborhood. Its walls were painted a sober, serviceable gray; its doors, windows, and shutters were in good repair, and gave an orderly, well-dressed appearance to the establishment. It was an attractive place, and, in addition to the sign over the door, there was an illuminated lamp with "Sailors' Rest" painted on the glass—a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night; a buoy and a light-house, for the guidance of English and (as we learned upon inquiry within) American sailors, who find themselves, stranded on shore, as much at a loss what to do with themselves as the landsmen who find themselves afloat at sea.

La Cala, the old port of Palermo, is a most interesting and picturesque oval basin surrounded by antique

houses. When the sun shines, it resembles a mirror in a golden frame. Between it and the sea stands the old fortress Castellamare, which, although dismantled and, in 1860, after Garibaldi captured it, thrown down to prevent its being garrisoned anew by King Bomba's soldiers, is nevertheless an imposing pile of masonry. The houses that face upon La Cala are old and curious, many of them with gables and picturesque balconies. The sunny color of their walls contrasts pleasantly with their red-tiled roofs and the bright flowers in painted boxes on the window-sills. La Cala is a busy place; the broad esplanade in front of the houses is always crowded with carts and drays, and in the basin are all sorts of queer-looking craft — feluce, golette, fishing-smacks of every rig known to the Sicilian main. Many of them are most ancient vessels, strange sea monsters, with great staring eyes painted on their bows and lee-boards that look like fins. On all of them are little shrines, before which lamps are kept burning. The sailormen belonging to these craft wear fantastical costumes, which give them the air of Barbary corsairs and the Sallee rovers made familiar to us by much study of fascinating wood-cuts in our well-thumbed "Robinson Crusoe." Tough and hearty, sun-browned, sea-worn, web-footed sea-dogs, so Moorish-looking, some of them, that one might almost fancy they were descendants of the crews of the two Barbarossas—Uruj and his brother, Kheyr-ed-din—or of that redoubtable rover, Aydin Reis, whom the Spaniards of old dubbed "Cachidiablo" (Drub-devil). Fishing-smacks and coasters are constantly entering or leaving the harbor, which is reserved for this small, coast-wise traffic, and

therefore rarely contains a steam vessel, so that one has little trouble in fancying that as it looks to-day, so it must have looked centuries ago. From time to time, when you meet a group of sailors with yellow, brown, or red hair, blue eyes, and ruddy cheeks, stolid, earnest-looking chaps, more jovial in temperament than their excitable Saracenic-looking brethren, your memory carries you back to the days when a handful of "canning-men" lorded it over a multitude of Moors, who acknowledged the Northman's supremacy on land and his right to rule the Mediterranean waves.

Beginning at La Cala and extending south, a grand esplanade known as Il Foro Italico extends along the water-front between a sea-wall and the gardens in front of a long row of palaces. This grand boulevard, La Marina, from La Porta Felice to La Villa Giulia, is several hundred feet in width, and down the centre of it there are two rows of ilex-trees. The waves beat against the sea-wall, and often during storms great clouds of spray sprinkle the flowers in the gardens in front of the palaces. In the summer-time Il Foro Italico is the grand promenade of fashionable Palermo. There, in the evening, crowds of idlers sit gazing out to sea as they sip lemonade or partake of ices, "granata," and the like, for which the cafés of Palermo are famous. Nothing can be finer than the view obtained from this sea-front, nothing more picturesque or stately than the palaces, some of them the richest in Sicily, occupied by families whose names have been household words in Sicilian history for many generations; and near by, in La Villa Giulia, is always music on fine afternoons and evenings, where it is delightful to promenade beneath the grand trees among the flowers and statuary.

## **XI**

### **SUNNY WINTER DAYS**

**La Villa Belmonte—Mondello—La Villa Scalea—San Martino  
—A Noble Charity—Ancient Trees.**

**CONTRARY** to the dogma of the weatherwise of more northern latitudes, as the days grew longer the cold did not grow stronger, and almost at the opening of the new year the good weather, which had been confidently predicted for Palermo and its environment during January, set in, and more delightful sunny days, grander star-lit nights, cannot be imagined. Our Sicilian friends, who knew of our disappointment at finding December so wintry and tempestuous, now greeted us triumphantly when we met them, calling to us cheerily to know if Sicilian weather was not all that they had promised that it would be when the new year brought round its changes. We were abroad early and late, spent our mornings and afternoons out of doors, rejoicing exceedingly in the sunlight and the fine air, which inspired us to venture on long walks, and rendered driving about Il Conco d' Oro and into the neighboring country a delightful recreation.

Our favorite morning ramble was to La Villa Belmonte, a most enchanting estate on the southern foothills of Monte Pellegrino, overlooking Acqua Sancta, the favorite seaside resort of fashionable Palermitans.

A FORTUNE-TELLER

UN  
30



From the grand gate of the domain a broad avenue winds upward through a grove of lemon-trees to La Villa Belmonte. On each hand are hedges of geranium, "fico d' India," heliotrope, and honeysuckle, woven masses of every shade of green. Pines and myrtles, ilex, cypresses, and curious pepper-trees shade the lawns, and in front of the great house is an "Italian Garden," embellished with statuary, vases, marble steps, and balustrades. Amid the roses are marble seats, where it is pleasant to sit in the sun as the eye wanders over the charming expanse of Il Conco d' Oro. The murmur of the city is borne hitherward on gentle breezes, and the chanting of the surf rises from the sea-shore below. The sound of distant voices, the laughter of children at play, fall gently upon the ear; the notes of thrushes, nightingales hidden in the shrubbery, and of larks singing high overhead, fill the air with gladness. The outlines of the hills and mountains, so rich in color, show tremulously, wreathed in mists rising on the warm air. Soft shadows flit across the landscape, and when the sunlight chases these away Il Conco d' Oro indeed seems an earthly paradise. From the city onward there extends towards the southeast a long crescent of yellow sand, the golden hem of a mantle of green meadows that sink in gentle declivity to the sea. All the air is still, not portentously silent, as in the lonely glens amid the savage peaks of Cuccio and the Mountain of the Griffins, but calm and restful—peace brooding where all nature is beautiful. Such is the prospect from La Villa Belmonte, and the beholder, in dreamy contemplation of its glories, drinks in all the delicious sights and sounds and odors of the enchanted spot.

In the Italian Garden we spent several mornings, where we tried to read, but constantly caught ourselves gazing far away over the top of the page, too listless to give our mind to what was written when so much that was sensuously delightful was pictured before us to woo our thoughts from even the semblance of study or work. Near our favorite seat is a monument, of all that we had seen most fantastic, and upon it an inscription which much amuses the passer-by, exciting curiosity to know the full meaning of it: "The last residence of the affectionate Fly; born in London from the quadrupedal family of terriers; died in Palermo 9th day of May, 1879." Such is the inscription; and we teased ourselves in vain to learn how the obelisk came there, who erected it, and why. The idea of erecting a monument to the memory of a pet dog is not new, but when we told our friends at the hotel what we had seen, a gentle melancholy moved them to go on pilgrimages to the tomb of "The Affectionate Fly," whose virtues are written in marble, over whose last resting-place a sorrowing biped of the human family had "dropped the tear of sensibility."

When it was our good-fortune to fall in with the gardener who had charge of this paradise, we returned home with an armful of flowers which he gathered for us, giving us, meanwhile, permission to pluck others, as many as we chose, for ourselves. When we did not meet our goodman-gossip in his accustomed walks, we climbed the hills behind the villa and helped ourselves to the wild flowers that grow in profusion all over the country-side; and as we returned home through the sunlight with our treasures, it was almost impossible to

persuade ourselves that we had found them in the latitude of Washington, D. C., blooming early in January.

We ventured abroad one morning before sunrise, intending to be present when the fishermen who had spent the night off the coast returned with their catch to their homes in the little fishing village of Mondello, one of the most picturesque hamlets on the north Sicilian shore. As the sun arose from behind the purple mountains, the eastern sky was suffused with a shell-pink glow; the horizon-line but vaguely suggested where the sea and sky met and mingled in opalescent light. The heavens overhead were a dark, steel blue, the waters far out from land emerald; hitherward, the sea shone brightly iridescent in ever-changing sheen of heliotrope and apple-green and uncertain shades of polished and antique bronze; nearer, bands of purple, ultra-marine and orange, bright gold, dove color, and creamy white. At a short distance from the shore an almost unbroken band of frosted silver stretched across the picture from side to side. The surf breaking upon the beach was milk white, and the waves that languidly rolled and crumbled upon the yellow sands flowed upon the beach in filmy undulations of ivory, coral, mother-of-pearl, glittering rifts of liquid light. Almost at our feet, ripples breaking into beads and lacework of foam and bubbles, catching all the tints of Iris, glistened like opals, onyx, and priceless gems. If one can imagine old Venetian lace woven of rainbow, such were the tints and texture of the borders of the sea on that enchanting morning.

The artist who, in Sicily, strives to hold the mirror up to nature finds himself foiled by the exhaustion of chromatic force and discovers that it is impossible, by

contrasts of light and shade, to give expression to the brilliancy of the Sicilian sky or the glamour of Sicilian landscapes. As well attempt to paint a ruby imbedded in a jacqueminot rose, a pearl in the heart of a cream-white rosebud! Watching the grand and wonderful spectacle of sunrise from Mondello, we forgot all about the fishermen and their fish, and when it was bright day we were content to turn our faces cityward, taking with us the memory of a scene the magnificence of which it is impossible to paint in words.

Four miles or more beyond La Favorita is La Villa Scalea. We were fortunate in being invited by the proprietress of this rich estate to visit her villa and inspect her treasures, in the collection of which she has displayed unerring good taste and rare discrimination. We were bidden to make ourselves at home and examine, at our leisure, many beautiful and precious articles most tastefully arranged where they would show to the best advantage in the spacious rooms of the palazzo. There were old tapestries of exquisite design and workmanship on all the walls, priceless Oriental rugs on the floors of the spacious saloons; there were Moorish cabinets curiously inlaid in rosewood and ebony of inestimable value; ancient treasure-chests, once the property of Saracen emirs; and chairs and divans fit for Norman kings to sit upon. We were greatly interested in examining examples of Saracenic-Spanish majolica, particularly one magnificent plaque in gold and white, presumably of the tenth century. It was almost two feet in diameter, as perfect in form, as bright in glaze and color, as if it had just come from the hand of the master-workman who created it in obedience to the com-

mand of a mighty caliph. Regally mounted was this royal object of art on a stand of carved ebony, and again and again we returned to it to wonder at its perfection and admire its matchless beauty. Although we saw many articles of European manufacture, the greater part of the collection consisted of the work of Arabic and Oriental artificers, and we could readily indulge the fancy that we had been admitted to the palace of a Moorish nobleman, who to his specimens of native art had added the spoils taken from Christian princes to embellish the castle of a valiant courtier of the caliphs of Cordova.

When we had passed two hours or more in wondering at all the beautiful things we found to interest us, tea was served in the English fashion, and when we took our leave we found in our carriage large wicker trays of fruits and flowers, honey in dainty jars, and flasks of wine, all of which were from the gardens, orchards, and vineyards surrounding the palazzo.

One fine afternoon, when the mild weather wooed us far afield, we found ourselves at San Martino, an ancient Benedictine convent built by Gregory the Great in the seventh century, but now occupied by "La Colonia Agricola di San Martino." In this reformatory are twelve hundred boys, mostly street arabs of Palermo, who, but for the opportunity here offered them to become useful men, would remain in the condition of misery and criminal association in which they were born. The vast estate, once tilled by the serfs of the Abbot of San Martino, is cultivated by boys, who thus gain practical knowledge of husbandry which will stand them in good stead in after-life, when they go forth from their Alma Mater

to plough and prune in the fields and vineyards of their native island.

The healthy, wholesome appearance of the pupils and the orderliness of their deportment bear testimony to the care that is taken of them, and they bid fair to become good followers of St. Benedict, the holy monk who never ceased to preach the doctrine that he who labored with his hands was doing God's work and benefiting humankind. To good uses, therefore, has the old monastery been put. Instead of sheltering a few dreaming, idle drones, it has been turned into a busy bee-hive of workers, and its young inmates, rendered intelligent by the knowledge acquired in boyhood, will in after-years help to solve the social and political problems that present themselves on every hand for the consideration of all Sicilians who love their native land and pray for her good-fortune and success.

On the foot-hills of Monte Grifone, near the ancient convent of Santa Maria di Gesù, where we often walked, enjoying a marvellous view of Il Conco d' Oro, we found a constant source of delight in studying the ancient olive-trees, most picturesque in their incredible antiquity. There were hundreds of them said to have been planted by the Saracens, and consequently more than a thousand years old—grand ruined trees, gray and venerable, weird, misshapen, and fantastical, overgrown with vines and creepers like ruined towers, clutching moss-grown rocks with gnarled and knotted roots, grasping the earth with giant claws whose deathless grip had resisted the whirlwinds of many centuries. They reminded us of the supernatural beings described by Dante and drawn by Gustave Doré. We recalled

A SICILIAN "MADONNA"





the birth of the first priests of Rhea-Cybele, the Curetes and Corybantes, the first beings of human form, which sprang from the mountain-side in shape like trees — grand leafy monsters, brethren of the sacred oaks of Dodona ; and as we listened to the sighing of the wind in their branches we could fancy we heard "the voice of the powerful God murmuring the everlasting oracles."

One noble living ruin we found, whose boughs reminded us, by their mighty folds and cords, of the arm of Hercules ; its trunk, of the marble "torso" which blind Buonarroti loved to stroke and deftly touch, studying its faultless anatomy. From the roots of it there flowed a living spring, and amid its branches a flock of pigeons nested, resting broodingly or circling in short flights about its crown of leaves like the ring-doves that guarded the tree sacred to Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus and Dione. Near by a no less mighty form, with wide-spread roots appearing here and there above the turf, recalled the dragon-encircled tree from which Jason stole away the Golden Fleece ; and almost in its shadow grew a fresh young graft casting its slender arms heavenward above its lithe and graceful figure — Daphne, whom the "spotless goddess" transformed into an olive-tree when Apollo wooed the nymph too rudely and too persistently. What a world of mythology was revealed in the attitudes and groupings of these old, old trees growing on the slopes of the Mountain of the Griffins, in the chasms of which are to be found the Caves of the Giants ! We were strangely fascinated by the fantasies that formed themselves in the mind as we passed through this land of chimeras and uncanny

presences. We returned again and again, drawn to it, especially in the gloaming, when unearthly shapes wavered and trembled between light and darkness, teasing sight and imagination, as deepening shadows, weaving mystery, transfigured the landscape over which there seemed to linger the twilight of the ancient gods.

## **XII**

### **AT THE OPERA**

**A Study of Sicilian Character—The Rival Claques—Initiating a New Opera Troupe—"Carmen"—"Toreador Attento"—A Musical "Sicilian Vespers"—Moral.**

**PALERMITANS are music-mad. No less emphatic term will adequately describe their intense craving for the kind and quality of music that stirs their hearts, arouses their passions, and appeals to their imaginations. Music with them is really an affair of the heart rather than an intellectual delight, as it is with the Germans. A Sicilian audience at an opera, actually and in a practical sense, "assists" at the representation; it makes itself an important factor of the performance, as much a part of the opera as the Greek chorus was a part of the exhibition on the stage. The audience not only hears the music, but feels it, lives it. The crowd seems to become vibrant, infected by the harmony and rhythm, responding involuntarily to the tone of the instruments and the expression of the singers. The auditors are rarely silent; they attend the performances in the Politeama, not to see and be seen—they go there to hear and to be heard.**

**To visit the capital of Sicily when, of all operas, "Carmen" is having a run—in other words, when**

there is a season of "Carmen" at the Politeama-Garibaldi—without attending one or more performances, is like being at Seville and failing to see a bull-fight, or visiting Rome and neglecting to avail oneself of the opportunity of acquiring malaria by a visit to the Colosseum by moonlight.

From a New York or London point of view, going to the opera in Palermo is not a ruinously extravagant form of polite amusement. If the cost of tickets, flowers, carriages, and the other accessories and superfluities is compared with the ruling market-price of the same in New York, it will be found that the balance is overwhelmingly in favor of Palermo. A pair of white gloves (gentleman's) costs in Palermo three and a half lire (seventy cents) for the very best quality; a lady may have ten buttons for the same price, additional buttons costing at the rate of twenty-five centesimi (five cents) for each pair of buttons up to  $x+y$  buttons in all. A vettura with two horses, coachman in livery, very smart and well turned out, may be hired for opera service for eight lire (\$1 60). But one can ride comfortably to the Politeama from any part of the city in clean, reputable-looking carozze for the exceedingly reasonable sum of sixty centesimi, or twelve cents American money. One can buy a bunch of five hundred of the rarest violets for a lira and a half (thirty cents) or an armful—literally that—of magnificent roses for the New York price of one American beauty or a pair of Boston jacqueminots. A box (palcho) containing chairs for ten people costs but thirty-five lire (\$7 00); half a box, eighteen lire; an orchestra chair (poltrona), seven lire; a posto distinto (orchestra circle), five lire; standing-room in

the pit (*platea*), two and a half lire; a seat in the family circle (*prima cavea*), one lira; and foot-room in the gallery (*seconda cavea*), fifty centesimi (one dime); and, to complete the price-list of a Palermitan opera outfit, a libretto costs five cents. A reduction is made to the military, who, it is understood, are to present themselves in uniform, which they do in large numbers; and as they lend dignity, distinction, and color to the audience, the favor shown them in the matter of prices is not considered excessive or inappropriate. The officers are conspicuous, by reason of their gold lace and trappings, at all times and in all positions, but between the acts especially are they prominent features of the picture. As the curtain falls they rise with professional precision, face about, raise, level, take aim, and, to complete the analogy, fire their opera-glasses point-blank at the lace and diamonds in the boxes, until the rising of the curtain, when they recover, ground opera-glasses, front face, and resume their seats.

A performance in the Politeama is preceded by the playing of Garibaldi's Hymn, an incident which always excites the audience to delirious demonstrations of delight and approval. It warms them up, as it were, to the work of the evening, and it may be said to be the only number of any programme which is invariably and inevitably applauded, and never, under any circumstances, at any time, by any person or persons whomsoever, hissed or interrupted. Drowned it may be by the volume and intensity of applause, but woe to the man, Sicilian or foreigner, who dares so much as lift the corner of his eyebrow or draw down the corner of his mouth

during the performance of the Sicilian psalm of liberty!

But to "Carmen"! On the occasion of its first representation during the season of which we are writing, the Politeama was packed from floor to ceiling. Long before the orchestra began the overture it became apparent that the audience was made up of two parties. What parties? Why two? What their intent, purpose, or sympathies? Only the best-informed Palermitan can tell, if he can be induced to speak at all about the matter. Without warning, without cause, so far as the uninitiated foreigner could discern, one party broke into a round of applause, clapping hands, shouting, whistling, roaring like the waters of the Bay of Palermo against the shores of Monte Pellegrino. Equally without apparent cause the other party began to hiss and groan, to hoot and utter shrill, angry cries. During the overture the demonstrations and counter-demonstrations were repeated frequently and with increasing enthusiasm, followed by a demand for the repetition of the entire overture and opposing disturbances, hissing, and cries of "Basta! Basta!" An encore was not granted, and when the curtain went up there was a pandemonium of applause, hisses, and groans. The parties had changed sides—those who had hissed the performance of the overture applauded the refusal to repeat it, those who had demanded its repetition resented the denial of their demands. So the audience continued to rave and roar during the first part of the evening; first one party applauded and the other hissed—when the latter hissed, the former applauded; at no time was there unanimity of sentiment or concert of demonstration,

except during the performance of the Garibaldi Hymn.

When the curtain went up on the first act, the house divided itself into two very nearly equal factions, one of which, apparently, applauded the scenery, while the other expressed its disapproval of the same. The first notes of the chorus were rendered inaudible by an outburst of hissing. The entrance of Michaela was the signal for "short-winded accents of new broils" among the "gods." José was roundly hooted when he came upon the scene. His duet with Michaela did not please many of his auditors, but at the end of the third scene he gave a cue and an occasion to his partisans, and they overwhelmed the hisses by a short, decisive, angry round of applause.

The début of Signora C——, who had come to Palermo with the enthusiastic endorsement of the musical public of Milan and Florence, was made under most trying circumstances. Signora C—— is not a Calvé, but she knows how to sing Carmen, has a clear, sweet voice, and acts with grace and admirable discretion. Nevertheless, she had to run the gantlet of the yelling barbarians in the prima and seconda cavea. A cruel test it was of her nerves and temper. She is a brave woman, albeit slight and dainty of face and form; and with a courage that won for her the admiration of the more manly and gentler part of the audience she struggled on through the first act, never once sang false nor missed her cue. Partly because she sang very charmingly, and, doubtless, partly because she was not Carmen—probably for no other reason than the latter—Michaela was the first one of the singers to receive a round of genuine applause;

but until the close of the first act all the other performers were treated with scant courtesy—indeed, that is a mild and timid phrase—with downright churlishness—by the audience, which gave a painful exhibition of what may be bluntly called “bad manners.”

At the end of the act pandemonium broke loose again. There were applause, hissing, whistling, cat-calls, an undertone of roaring, which continued as long as the demonstration lasted. The “implacables” seemed to “have it”—“they had it”—there were no recalls. Between the acts the male occupants of the parquet arose, turned their backs to the stage, lighted cigarettes or cigars, and, puffing away, critically examined the occupants of the *posti distincti* and of the double row of *palchi*. One of the “gods” let his hat fall into the pit, and there were uproarious shouts of “Bis! Bis!” laughter, and applause, that for several minutes drowned the roar and buzz of conversation. There was no smoking in the boxes, where ices, confetti, and liqueurs were passed around to such persons and personages as saw fit to order the same from the waiters of the *Caffe Politeama*.

The second act opened badly for the singers and those of the audience who desired to hear Carmen's solo with which the act begins. There were disturbances which continued all through the earlier scenes. When Escamillo sang the great barytone aria, “*Toreador attento!*” which Guy de Maupassant heard so vigorously applauded in 1890, the “gods” hissed every refrain, and at the end of the number wildly hooted the singer from the stage and refused to allow him to be recalled, as he nevertheless richly deserved to be, for he sang well and with fine expression and spirit.

Not until José sang the solo, "Alto la, chi va la?" and sang it well, taking the final high note easily and holding it finely, did any one of the artistes score a success with the crowd of disorderly critics in the cavea. Then, however, the applause and cries of "Bis! Bis!" were so emphatic, so fiercely sustained, that José came to the foot-lights again and again, smiling, bowing his acknowledgments.

José had won his victory. He had been encored. And thenceforward he had nothing to complain of in his treatment by the occupants of the galleries, who applauded his every effort, encored all his solos. When he did not at once heed their demand the "gods" hissed him and kept up the disturbance until he was compelled to sing the number over again in order that the rest of the opera might be gone on with.

Carmen was now listened to attentively and in silence. The toreador sang as if he regarded the raving of the audience no more than the bellowing of the bulls he knew how to conquer. He maintained his indifference of manner, kept his head, sang his best, and developed a claque which increased in numbers and lung power, so that at the end of the act, after José had been recalled thrice, and had induced Carmen to advance to the foot-lights with him, but had not been able to persuade Escamillo to show himself, a cry went up from all over the auditorium, "Toreador! Toreador!" and the toreador came forth bowing and smiling. Then the house rose at him, cheered him, waved their hats at him—and his troubles were over. He had run the gantlet of the Palermitan "gods," and was enthusiastically accepted as their toreador of the day.

Carmen triumphed in the third act. She sang her duet with José admirably, and acted with self-sustained dramatic power. Her encore, although long delayed, was bravely won, and came at the very close of the opera. But, when it did come, there was no mistaking the fact that the brave little lady had compelled the admiration of all clagues and all factions in the audience. She was recalled again and again; and as the audience by this time had roared itself into good-nature, every member of the company came in for a share of applause. Favors thus bestowed can hardly be said to be worth struggling for. It must have been with much heart-swelling and not easily concealed contempt that Signora C—— and her fellow-artistes received the ovation that brought their first representation of "Carmen" in Palermo to a successful close.

The Palermitans, undoubtedly, are lovers of music. Many of them have a delicate musical sense, and some are instinctively good critics; but it seems strange that music awakens in the bosoms of the lower sort of opera-goers passions that inspire acts and exhibitions of brutality that would do discredit to the sunny side of a Plaza de Toros.

The opera in Palermo does not begin until nine o'clock, and what with interruptions, pauses in the performance incident to a first night, long waits between the acts, it was after one o'clock in the morning before the large audience was ready to disperse. In time, however, the concluding demonstrations came to an end, the audience simmered down, and the cries and hurrahs ceased. The gas-lights were turned out all over the theatre, hundreds of matches

**SICILIANA**

UNI



were struck preparatory to lighting cigars and cigarettes, and so we moved out of the theatre like an incipient torch-light procession, and "gave ourselves to the street" roaring in chorus "Toreador attento!"

We have dwelt at length and particularly on the performance of "Carmen" in the Politeama of Palermo, for the reason that we believe that from the study of even so light and trivial a subject much knowledge may be gained of the character and propensities, likes and dislikes, of the Sicilians. There is a strong infusion of Spanish blood flowing in the veins of all classes of Palermitans; therefore, they love "Carmen" and its pictures of the bull-ring, and go wild with enthusiasm over the song of the toreador. What other lessons are to be learned by those who closely observe the manners and customs of the people we shall endeavor to indicate by Abraham Lincoln's device of telling "a little story":

In the days before "the late unpleasantness between the North and South," when discussions of the slavery question led to many misunderstandings between members of Congress and other citizens of the slave-holding republic, a certain grave and thoughtful Dutchman was sent from Holland to represent his country near the government of the United States. On the morning after his arrival, he was seated at breakfast in a Washington hotel, when an "elegant gentleman" entered the dining-hall, and, drawing his derringer, shot a person seated at the same table at which the diplomatist was solemnly sipping his coffee. With that marvellous imperturbability which characterizes his race, the honest Dutchman turned to his companion, who sat petrified with horror by the tragedy which

had just been enacted, and remarked: "Sdranch beople, dose Amerigans! If dey do such dings for preakvast, vot vill dey do vor dinner?"

If the Palermitans behave in the manner above described, at the opera, what may they not do when, driven to desperation by unwise or tyrannous rulers, they risk their lives in mad attempts to sweep away political and social abuses which they believe are the prime causes of their misery and discontent?

### XIII

#### A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

The Alpine Club — Boccadifalco — The Summit of Cuccio—  
A Vision of Ætna—San Martino—Monreale.

AT sunrise on a clear January morning twelve members of the Alpine Club of Palermo and their guest for the day, an American, met outside of La Porta Nuova, one of the picturesque ancient gates of Palermo, dressed and provisioned for an excursion into the mountains. The expedition was the first business meeting of the season, and the club members who intended to take part in it looked upon the proposed "giro" merely as a preliminary canter to try their hob-nailed mountain-boots, take the size of their belts, and test the spikes of their alpenstocks.

Promptly at the appointed hour the expedition took its way to the hills, from La Porta Nuova along Il Corso Calatafimi. The objective point of three of the party is the summit of Monte Cuccio, ten good English miles from the city gate. The other members of the club have decided to attempt Castellaccio, and the rendezvous is to be the monastery of San Martino in the valley between two grand mountains, the two most prominent of the peaks that rise from the border of Il Conco d' Oro. Turning into La Via Cappuccini, "the three," crossing Il Conco d' Oro, proceeded

three miles and arrived at the quaint village of Boccadifalco, where their mountain climb really began. Boccadifalco is at the entrance to Il Vallone di Paradiso. It straddles the path leading up to it, and the stream which flows down to Il Conco d' Oro from the valley above struggles fiercely through a narrow, tortuous gorge, on the edges of which perch the houses of the town. From this very irregular array of quaint old dwellings, that seem almost to totter on the verge of the ragged cliffs between which the Oreto cleaves its way, the town scrambles and tumbles indiscriminately, indescribably, up the front of steep terraces. In the heart of the town, where the streets and by-ways twist and twine in an almost inextricable confusion, there stands a little church—not mentioned in guide-books—in no way notable—tucked away almost out of sight, as if the devout Boccadifalconi who worship there were ashamed of it. Early mass was being celebrated in the sanctuary, of which even the name was not to be learned, and to say that the building was packed is simply to ignore the fact that not more than two-thirds of the worshippers were within the walls of the edifice.

At the upper end of the town the main street wriggles down to a little bridge that crosses the stream, and then as steeply zigzags up again, to lose itself amid the houses on the other side of the watercourse, like a serpent slyly approaching from its haunts among the rocks to cross the sunshine and as swiftly to take refuge again in its hidden lairs and lurking-places. Near the bridge, standing in the bed of the stream, and on the bank of it, by an open irrigating-drain built of stone, there was a busy and pict-

uresque group of women in bright petticoats with small shawls pinned, hood-fashion, over their heads, all engaged in washing garments once as gaudy as dyer's pot could make them, now tattered, faded, patched, but nevertheless, to the minds of the owners, worth washing and patching again and again. It was an industrious assemblage and a merry one. Many of the women were young, well favored, and lissome; those in the stream were barefooted, and, although there was a certain abandon in their attitudes, a frank and simple-minded disregard of the finer proprieties regarding the happing and gathering-up of skirts and philacteries, Diana at her bath never more unconsciously exhibited her ungirt shapeliness or less designedly displayed her grace of limb.

The path of the climbers led them from the bridge along the side of the brook, until the town lay a hundred yards behind; then, turning to the left, it mounted the face of a steep knoll, from the top of which a view of Monte Cuccio broke upon the sight, a vision of grandeur which, to those unaccustomed to Sicilian scenery, was a spectacle to wonder at, a subject for day-dreaming, a sight never to fade from the memory.

We stood in the deep shadows of the lower valley. The lesser hills were shrouded in mysterious darkness, with which there seemed to be blended dark-green and faintly glowing tints, an undertone of darkest blue. The narrow road up which we climbed took to itself a hue of violet-gray, and the groves of gnarled and knotted olive-trees outlined in shimmering light seemed as if etched in unburnished steel. Before us, as we looked up the valley, towering three

thousand six hundred feet into the air, Monte Cuccio uplifted its symmetrical, triangular peak, a stupendous mass of brilliantly illuminated rocks and precipices, shining as rich and rare as a pyramid of Guinea gold. Near at hand, on the valley-side, under perpendicular cliffs, where the shadows were deepest, were many lime-kilns, and through the open mouths of their furnaces there burst forth a fierce glow from the fires within, which lighted up the forms of crouching, busy beings bent and doubled under enormous burdens. The chimeras skulked out of the surrounding darkness, as if they came from the nether world, cast their loads into the glowing pits, and disappeared into the shadows again. In silence they toiled, like gnomes, like laboring cyclops, weird and spectral, haunting the borders of the night, feeding subterranean fires.

We made haste to be gone from the dark valley into the daylight of the mountains, and, leaving the imps of darkness flitting about their paling fires, we pushed onward to the glory of Il Vallone di Paradiso. Far above in the serene ether, the full moon, swinging majestic, hung like a bowl of silver, just above the pinnacle of Monte Cuccio. The front of the mountain, facing the east, glowed in the light of morning, while the hills behind us still faintly reflected the dying splendor of the moon. As we clambered up the steep ascent, following a bridle-track, we suddenly passed into the full glory of a new day; the moon had dropped behind the peaks above us and not a shadow or thought of night lingered in all the land.

We now beheld with wonderful distinctness, several miles of our road zigzagging upward to the shoulder

of Cuccio, and we braced ourselves for as stiff a bit of scrambling as man or "asinello" ever had cut out for him. The path became steeper and steeper and more tortuous as we climbed higher. It also became less and less distinctly marked. At times we lost our way, on which occasions we left the matter of finding it again to the instinct of our four-footed companion, and he invariably brought us back into the track, but not until after he had extended his peregrinations for the purpose of nibbling a few of the tempting bunches of grass that, on the mountain-side, grew more luxuriantly than in the valleys.

At last! Three hours after setting out from La Porta Nuova we arrived at the tiny Alpine club-house perched on the pinnacle of Monte Cuccio. And what a view was presented to our sight! The sky was cloudless; the atmosphere, deprived of moisture by recent rains, was as transparent as the air on those grand October days that are the glory of an American fall.

Looking down from Monte Cuccio towards the sea, one beholds a wide extent of wonderfully fertile valley, overgrown by almond orchards and plantations of the fruits for which Sicily, and especially Il Conco d' Oro, are famous all the world over. For miles and miles, in spring-time, the traveller in this sheel of gold makes his way through an ocean of orange blossoms that perfume the air with odors rivalling the spices of Araby the Blest. Orange blossoms are everywhere, white as snow, glistening all the whiter because they shine amid deep, rare green foliage. Amid the orange and lemon plantations are pastures, grain fields, and gardens, and where the soil is mixed with detritus

washed from the hills terraced vineyards give promise of an abundance of grapes. A score of towns and villages, red-tiled and white-walled, appear here and there, connected by highways with each other and the mother city. These "strade" wind through the valley, dropping gently from the mountains, and, although apparently wandering aimlessly hither and thither through the land, are nevertheless all trending towards Palermo, the Rome of Sicily, to which all Sicilian roads lead at last.

Turning from the view of Il Conco d' Oro and the city by the sea, facing the south and east, a wonderful change comes over the spirit of one's dream. Beyond the double peaks of Monte Pizzuta and the turtle-back summit of Costa di Carponato, Rocca Busambra shows its stupendous precipices, extending for miles along the sky-line, its sides all jointed and greaved like the armor of an armadillo. The imagination easily recognizes its resemblance to the monstrous shape of a saurian, showing its back, its neck, its bristling head and beak over the lesser hills; these latter, all snow-capped, may be likened to the foam-strewn waves in which the monster plays and vaunts its infinite strength. Beyond Busambra the eye sweeps through a range of one hundred miles of sea and shore as far as Cape Orlando.

But Cape Orlando is not upon the verge of vision. The sky does not draw its mysterious curtain even at that distance from Monte Cuccio. Beyond the farthest range of the Madonian mountains, towering above all other peaks and pinnacles, there rises a superb dome of snow, grandly uplifting its vastness to the heavens. It dominates the land and looks

**NORMAN WINDOW. PALERMO**



down upon all the coast of Sicily; it presides majestically over the convocation of all the lesser hills that gather around it like barons of a mighty king kneeling before their lord. Back of the crests of the Madonian mountains a sky-line of glistening snow rises, gradually and evenly, from both sides of the picture to a rounded cupola, from which there drifts a feathery cloud of steam. The background of blue sky throws this snowy eminence into high relief, and all the picture shows distinctly in sunlight, rare in color, wonderfully impressive in contour and significance. The stranger needs no guide-book or well-versed alpinist to tell him what vision rises before him. For one moment doubting, then mastered by a strange elation, he cried aloud "Ætna!" and his companions, accustomed to the spectacle, replied "Ætna!" and leave him to marvel in silence.

Yes, there was Ætna, and in his presence all the mountains dwindle to hills, and all the hills to pleasant knolls. The eye noted nothing but the sky, the sea, and Ætna, through leagues and leagues of thin, translucent air; so distant and yet apparently so near, it seemed as if one might journey to its base before night had shut out the view of the everlasting snow. Thereafter, all the glories of landscape, of mountains and valleys, and long reach of coast seemed insignificant and of small import; the eye lingers upon Ætna, attracted resistlessly to the superb spectacle.

From the summit of Cuccio our downward path ran very appropriately through Il Vallone dell' Inferno; and, as the leader of the expedition, our four-footed companion set a rattling pace, we reached the plain between Monte San Pietro and the farther hills,

where stands the monastery of San Martino, in time to keep tryst with the members of the Alpine Club, who had climbed to the Norman keep of Castellaccio.

Our meeting and our procession with our friends to the gates of San Martino savored of the old, old times. The pilgrims from Cuccio had stopped at a quaint hamlet whereof every house was a charming study for an artist. The ancient dwellings, time and weather stained, gathered together in a most picturesque group at the bottom of a lovely glen, where three or four huge trees cast a ripple of shadow over red tiles and white walls. It scarcely needed the invitation of bright-eyed girls to induce us to rest awhile and drink of the crystal water that fell into a stone basin all overgrown with mosses and delicate ferns. The children and their elders made a pretty picture, bright and gay with many colors, which blended charmingly with the greenery and gray of the old fountain. Four venerable monks in brown gowns and hoods drew near apace and joined the company, and a procession of young priests, headed by two Canons of San Martino, came winding down the valley and approached the well. Presently there came in sight the party of alpinists from Castellaccio. Lastly, there came two fair ladies who had walked all the way from La Porta Nuova, and who, presently, merrily protested that they were not footsore or weary in the least. This goodly array of pilgrims took up its march along the valley to the monastery gates, and, as they went, discoursed of their adventures during the morning. The monks and gowned priests bore them company, and the asses followed, urged on by their drivers, at whose heels ran the children, marvelling to see so

many travellers on the road to old San Martino. In such order we came to the great gates, which were thrown open to receive us as the clock struck two.

After a short halt, the pilgrims again set out on their different journeys. The three from Cuccio followed the road which leads from Il Vallone di Paradiso over the hills to the town of Monreale, where William the Good built his wonderful cathedral. We passed the foot of the great hill on which stands Castellaccio, the walls and towers of which still remain, although much weakened by the weight of centuries, and crumbling into ruin. Where our road began to descend into the valley of the Oreto we had a grand view of Monreale, its cloisters and cathedral, but we could spare only a few moments to sit on an old stone settle where the monks of San Martino, many years ago, before their monastery was turned into an "agricultural colony," were wont to sit and watch the shadows chase the sunlight across the lovely valley.

From the abbot's seat to Monreale was a short twenty-minutes' walk, and we arrived at the cathedral door in time to enter that superb edifice and catch a glimpse of all its splendors lighted by the rays of the setting sun. Surely the gold and rich mosaics of that interior never showed more magnificently than they did on that fine winter evening. In the Cathedral of Monreale all that the brain of man could devise, all that the hand of man could create, has been realized to beautify one of the wonders of the world of art. Nevertheless, while standing in the irised light of the grand choir, looking at the jewelled walls, at the gold, the marble, the jasper, the lapis lazuli,

teased out of thought by all the dainty loveliness of the place, we remembered the glory of the snow-capped dome of Ætna, marvellous in sunlight, and the painfully wrought earthly splendor of Monreale faded away as the soul recalled the words, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

## **XIV**

### **SOLUNTO**

**Winter Scenes—Blossoms and Snow-flakes—Bagheria—Ancient Solous—A Carthaginian Town—Men in Sheepskins—A Shipwreck.**

**AFTER** waiting for several days for clear weather, wearying at our confinement within doors, we welcomed a sudden outburst of mellow light as the sun was rising one chilly morning, and, making ourselves believe that we were to have a fine day, ordered a vettura to be ready in half an hour.

As we started on our excursion to ancient Solous, a twelve-mile drive along the shore of Il Conco d' Oro from Palermo to Bagheria and Cape Zaffarano, the clouds settled down again and it began snowing. It might snow all day—it might clear. We took the benefit of the doubt. If it cleared, well and good. If it continued to snow, we should see many sights and have many experiences not obtainable when the sun was shining. Our "vetturino," to whom the weather was a matter of small importance, was willing to continue the journey.

"Non fa multo freddo!" Were not the Americans accustomed to snow?

The Americans had seen snow before.

"Va bene. Avanti!"

In some respects the drive of twenty-four miles to Bagheria and back was one of the most interesting it was our fortune to take during our stay in Sicily. We entered into the spirit of it, and our hearts were cheered by the merry jingle of the Russian sleigh-bells attached to the trappings of our three horses harnessed abreast. The bells gave out a pleasant sound, which seemed appropriate to the snow-storm, and, although our vettura was on wheels, it required but little effort of the imagination to fancy we were actually sleighing in a country where a sleigh would be as great a curiosity as a date-palm growing in the open air in winter-time would be to the inhabitants of our native New York.

Presently the sleet turned to hail, which beat mercilessly upon beasts and men and so astounded the asses plodding along the road, drawing heavily laden carts through the mud and snow, that they stopped and, refusing to budge, stood shaking their heads and wagging their ears, which were strangely tickled and stung by the pelting hailstones. For a moment or two it seemed as if, after all, we should have to give up our expedition and return to our fireside in the hotel. We called to our vetturino, telling him to turn back if his heart failed him, but he bravely shouted, "Niente!" and, cracking his whip, set his horses in a gallop. The highway was crowded by all kinds of vehicles driven by men in sheepskin overcoats and trousers; weird shapes they represented—rustic fauns of winter, brown and white bears. No doubt they were comfortable; and, certainly, unless so clothed it would have been better for them not to have ventured out-of-doors on so inclement a day. When the

hailstorm passed the sunlight fell on Cape Zaffarano, far ahead of us, and turned it into silver; over the mountains, beyond Il Conco d' Oro, dense black clouds hung low, now hiding, now revealing, many snow peaks. There was a strange, unearthly white light over the sea, and from moment to moment, when the sun broke through rifts in the clouds, the waters gleamed with all the colors of a dying dolphin. We passed droves of pigs, flocks of goats and sheep, all of them bewildered by the unaccustomed spectacle of snow, and long rows of carts filled with skins of wine, heaps of lemons and oranges, in transit to the storehouses on La Via Borgo. Most unseasonable did the sunny fruit, partly concealed by snow, seem to us. When we reached the country beyond the custom-house at the borders of the town, we were interested by the weird incongruity of things in the vegetable world. The apple and pear trees were lifeless, but there were oranges and lemons hanging ripe amid dark green leaves; the plum-trees (carrubi) were in full blossom, and apparently none the worse for the hail and snow. The olive-groves were gray and fruitless, but in many fields there were long rows of pea-vines covered with white flowers which at first we mistook for snow-flakes. The pomegranates and fig-trees showed never a sign of flower or fruit, and the date-palms stood stark and stiff in the bitter cold. In one garden we saw a woman (an odd figure in a sheepskin coat) picking strawberries. It was curious to mark the surprise of children when they beheld the snow; they seemed not to know what use to make of it, did not play in it and with it, as children at home would be likely to do, but cuddled together in groups,

under the eaves of the houses, with their little coats and "cappas" hopped close around them, or toddled fearsomely about like the sparrows, with ruffled plumage, that chirped piteously as they hopped about in vain search for food.

The rivers we crossed, beginning with the Oreto, which flows close to the city wall, were swollen by the rain and melting snow, and came seething down from the hills, crossed the plain in tawny floods that overflowed their banks, and deposited clay and gravel wide upon the meadows and plantations.

After a journey of two hours we came to the office of "The Custodian of the Antiquities of Solunto." There we left our carriage and proceeded on foot, not an easy or pleasant excursion, for the snow had turned into rain, the roads were miry, and the wind was blowing a gale. We crossed a garden, and, taking a lane through an orchard of plum-trees, began the ascent of a steep and stony road that led us in half an hour to the ruins of the city we had set out to visit. Near the top of the easternmost summit of Monte Catalfano we found traces of the ancient city called "Solous," or "Soloes," by the Greeks, "Soluntum" by the Romans, "Solunto" by the men of to-day. It was originally a Phœnician town, one of the three settlements which remained to the traders from Tyre and Sidon when they were driven by the invading Greeks, in the seventh century B.C., from all other places in eastern and central Sicily. In the day of its prosperity the walls of Solous were two miles in circumference, and it was the most important outpost of the Phœnicians against the Greeks, who possessed the land to the eastward, having their outpost at Thermæ Himeren-

SARACENIC-NORMAN WINDOW. SYRACUSE



sis. Unlike many other Phœnician cities, Solous was seated on a hill near the sea, and not on the sea-shore. The site of this ancient town was forsaken by its founders, and the ruins discoverable to-day are not of Phœnician origin, but date from Roman times. History is strangely silent concerning Solunto. We know that Pyrrhus of Epirus captured it; that after the taking of Panormus by Metellus the citizens of Solous threw off the yoke of the Carthaginians and invited the Romans to lord it over them. "Thus," says the historian Freeman, "was the great Semitic city of Sicily for the second time won for Europe. The Greek under Pyrrhus had made his way in for a moment; the Roman was to keep his hold abidingly."

Ages ago the very existence of Solous seems to have been forgotten, all vestige of it had disappeared, and not until 1825 was it possible to ascertain precisely the site of the ancient Phœnician metropolis; moreover, it was a peasant, not an archæologist, who brought to light a colossal statue of Jupiter and a curious statuette of Isis, which bore witness that Roman and Egyptian gods had usurped the honor formerly paid to Ashtoreth and Baal. Little remains above ground of the Roman town that replaced the older settlement, but the traveller to-day climbs the ancient paved causeway, and, entering the limits of the city, marks the streets running at right angles between the foundations of rows of houses lately excavated and barely showing above the surface of the ground. A part of the colonnade of a house which attracts attention was re-erected but a few years ago, and, although it makes a picturesque feature of the

landscape, it seems to intrude itself upon the utter desolation of the scene where

“. . . self-slain on his own strange altar,  
Death lies dead.”

On the day of which we are writing, during our short stay at Solunto, it rained as if the fountains of the great deep had been broken up, as in the days of Noah, or, to use an illustration more in keeping with our classic surroundings, as it rained in the days of Deucalion. Seeking refuge from the storm, we took shelter in the lee of the portico of the restored house, where we found three goat-herds cowering, chilled to the bone, their teeth chattering and their sheepskin coats soaking, dripping wet. Nevertheless, they greeted us pleasantly, and one of them politely inquired what I Signori were doing on the mountains on such a day. We felt some embarrassment in answering his inquiry. To explain that we were sight-seeing on such a day, in such weather, and in such a storm-swept locality, seemed to us to be equivalent to making an admission that if we were not indeed bereft of common-sense, we were, at least, somewhat fanatical in our pursuit of archæological knowledge. We were further embarrassed by our ignorance of the Sicilian dialect, so we limited ourselves to the words of the inquiry: “Piovera questa sera?” The three goat-herds nodded their heads violently, and our interlocutor, casting an eye to windward, confidently asserted that it would rain abundantly that evening, if it did not snow; that it would certainly rain to-morrow, and probably would not clear for several days.

In default of a greater command of words with

which to continue the conversation, we presented our three storm-bound companions with a cigar apiece, which they concealed within their sheepskin coverings, remarking, presumably, that they would smoke them after dinner. And there we stood, they in their sheepskins, we in our mackintoshes, eying one another curiously, all anxious to talk; they to question the "forestieri," we to catechise the strange denizens of a country that was little like any other region we had yet visited in all our wanderings. However, they were good-natured fellows, and, although free and familiar in manner, exhibited a certain courtesy and rough politeness that inspired confidence that at least they were not brigands. In their sheepskins they looked like bears, but they were good-natured beasts, and when we turned to go, one after the other, they extended their great, rough, dripping paws to us, and, bending, made as if they would kiss the hands of the strangers as they bade us farewell.

As we made our way down the hill, we passed a very ancient sacrificial table, a rude slab of rock on two upright blocks, the sides of which were carved curiously. The whole structure was placed on a base of rough masonry. Upon this altar in old times priests sacrificed, probably to Poseidon, beseeching him to reward the labors of the fishermen, who, in ancient times, as to-day, at all seasons of the year put out from this shore to cast their nets in the wide bay which extends from Cape Zaffarano to the square head of Cefalù, thirty-five or forty miles distant in the east. That the altar was sacred to Poseidon there seems to be little doubt. He was the protector of the ancient city, as we know from coins of Solous pre-

served in the Museum of Palermo, on which are stamped the head of the sea-god, surrounded by inscriptions in Greek or Punic characters.

In fair weather the view from the heights of Solunto is indescribably grand, as we could readily imagine. Storming, as it was on the day of our visit, we nevertheless, from time to time, caught magnificent prospects of the Madonian mountains, and down below us we beheld the sea, lashed by the tempest into glistening foam, a deserted waste, for on all the expanse of it there was not one vessel, large or small, in sight.

Unhappy, thrice unhappy, were the mariners who must needs sail the seas on that fearful day—a day that will long be known to the fishermen of Cape Zaffarano as “The Day of the Shipwreck”; for, as we learned on our return to Palermo at an early hour that very morning, a large bark, which at sunrise found herself in the bight of the Bay of Termini dangerously close to the shore, in attempting to weather Cape Zaffarano was swamped by tremendous seas and foundered off the point of the headland, carrying down with her a crew of seven men, whom brave fishermen struggled in vain to save, risking their lives in an impossible attempt to reach the sinking vessel.

When we at last arrived at the office of the guardian of the antiquities of Solunto, we were as dripping wet as our friends the goat-herds, whom we had left on the mountain-top, and who had been out for days in the constant storm. Nevertheless, we soon forgot our discomfort, for we were made welcome to seats by the fireside in the snug office of the custode, where, with his permission, we satisfied our vast appetites

with the contents of the lunch-basket we had brought from Palermo.

Our host offered us a dish of "pasta con pomodoro," which we knew better than to refuse. We found it exceedingly appetizing, prepared as only Sicilians know how to prepare macaroni with tomato sauce, and we can well imagine that those who can afford to have it on their tables constantly become as fond of it as the Scotchman of his porridge, the Englishman of his Yorkshire pudding, or the Yankee of his pork and beans.

Bidding our kind entertainer good-bye, we entered our vettura, in which we found, placed there by our thoughtful vetturino, who was ever solicitous for our comfort and welfare, half a dozen hot-water bottles, which gave us no inconsiderable relief from the pinching of wet and frosted feet. Having fortified our Jehu with a glass of Marsala to enable him to resist the cold, we started through the storm, and without further adventure arrived early in the afternoon at the Hôtel des Palmes. Over a blazing fire, in the comfort of our own apartment, we dozed and dreamed and fought over again our battles with Sicilian snow-storms and gales, such as terrified the hearts of the crew of the pious Æneas what time he passed along the coast of Sicily during that tempestuous winter which—who knows how many centuries ago?—

" . . . saw the Trojan fleet dispersed, distressed,  
By stormy winds and wintry heaven oppressed."

## **XV**

### **PIANA DEI GRECI**

**A Mysterious Hill Town—Spectral Trees—Parco—A Dreary Ride through a Lone Land—An Albanian Colony—Greek Churches—Picturesque Costumes—Curious Customs—Weddings “to Order.”**

WE had heard much of a mysterious town situated far up in the mountains, about sixteen miles from Palermo, Piana dei Greci by name, and we had been told that the best day to visit it—in fact, the only time when we could see it at its best—was on Sunday or a feast-day, when the people dressed themselves in the costumes of their Albanian forefathers and attended services where they worshipped according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox Church.

We consulted with our faithful vetturino, and, while he carefully refrained from prophesying fine weather for our proposed excursion, he ingeniously suggested that it was possible we might wait a fortnight, a month—until spring, for that matter—without finding a day when the weather would be perfectly to our liking.

“Why delay?” he asked. “It cannot storm worse than it did when the Americans made their trip to Solunto, and I Signori enjoyed that adventure.”

We were obliged to confess that the trip in question

had not been without its attractions; moreover, we had seen his horses, and did not doubt that the three sturdy beasts could make the little journey of thirty-six miles if the start were made in the early morning. As for the vetturino himself, he would be proud to drive the Americans anywhere, be the day fair or foul. The strangers must not think of leaving Sicily without seeing Piana dei Greci.

The strangers had no idea of missing any opportunity to see any of the interesting places in the island.

"Va bene. Avanti!"

"Avanti!" was a favorite word with our vetturino; there was something inspiring in the ring of his voice as he pronounced it. His cheery manner and snapping eyes encouraged one to believe that come what might, surmounting all obstacles, he would conduct his patrons in safety and insure them an interesting and instructive outing. Accordingly we ordered our lunches to be ready when the vettura came for us, and so, well provisioned and provided with rugs and wraps, we set out on our journey to the mysterious town "over the hills and far away."

The weather was cold, it threatened snow, but from time to time the sunlight broke through grand masses of clouds and flooded the world with dazzling white light. We left the city by La Porta San Antonio, crossed the Oreto, and took a road leading inland along the foot-hills on the eastern side of the valley, keeping Monte Grifone on our left hand. Six miles from Palermo we came to the town of Parco, where William II. had a hunting park and lodge, on the east side of the Oreto, over against Monreale, but farther up the valley and seated higher up the mountain slopes. We

had ascended many hundred feet since leaving the sea-shore, and the temperature had fallen considerably below the freezing-point. As we left Parco and ascended into the heart of the mountains, a snow-squall swept down upon us, the wind whistled shrilly, and the air became bitterly cold. We entered a savage country, beyond all imagination desolate and bleak. We met strange, uncouth-looking men clad in sheepskins, anxiously hurrying their flocks of goats and sheep down from the mountain-passes, for already there was half an inch of snow upon the road and all the hills were white and spectral. Nevertheless, along the roadside were purple irises in full bloom, and daisies, and in the clefts of the rocks ferns and ivy and jacks-in-the-pulpit, sweet alyssum, white ranunculus, yellow buttercups, and, in strange contrast to the drifting snow, heather in full bloom, such as ones sees on the Grampians and Cumberland hills in September.

Bleaker and more barren did the land become as we ventured farther and farther into the mountains; when we reached the upper table-lands there was three inches of snow upon our road, and the bad weather threatened to be worse for hours before it began to mend. We crossed a dreary moorland, as desolate as the Doone Valley, in Devonshire; everywhere the natural rock was tossed about in weird confusion—giant blocks standing on end and piled one upon the other; huge cromlechs they looked like, enormous monuments recalling the structures of the Druids and the race of Titans. But all this waste land among the boulders and broken reefs, so far as we could distinguish for the snow, had been tilled and cultivated with the greatest care.

INTERIOR OF CEFALÙ CATHEDRAL



Four hours after leaving Palermo we arrived at Piana dei Greci, a town of about seven thousand inhabitants, the largest of the Albanian cities in Sicily.

When the Byzantine Empire fell under the dominion of the Mussulmans, Albania alone, inspired by the ardent patriotism of Scanderbeg, continued for some years to offer effectual resistance to the power of her enemies. In 1488 A.D., overcome by overwhelming numbers, the Albanians resolved to abandon their unhappy country, at no matter what sacrifice of worldly goods, rather than submit to the oppression of their conquerors. Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Naples, received the Albanian ambassadors and showed them favor, and granted to their nation the privilege of founding in Sicily four colonies of exiled people, who crossed the seas, as did the later Pilgrim Fathers, seeking "freedom to worship God" and liberty to manage their temporal affairs. Certain of these exiles settled in Sicily, at Piana dei Greci, Palazzo Adriano, Contessa, and at Mezzojuso. There these brave people made homes for themselves, and in the lonely valleys where they built their cities their descendants have continued to dwell, cherishing the traditions of an ancient race, preserving the manners and customs and regulating their living according to the habits and laws of their ancestors.

The people who were willing to exile themselves rather than resign the right of worshipping God in their own way did not change their religious beliefs nor adopt new ideas, but insisted upon having, and obtained, the right to practise the ordinances of religion according to the ritual of the Orthodox Greek Church. They did, indeed, consent to acknowledge

the spiritual supremacy of the Holy Father at Rome, but in all other things maintained their independence, especially in matters ecclesiastical. Therefore there are to be found to-day in the heart of even so devout a Catholic country as Sicily communities of people who enjoy a religious liberty which secures to them their right to believe in many things that are utterly at variance with the creed of the Church of Rome. The priests, who neither shave their beards nor use the tonsure, are permitted to marry—a privilege of which they generally avail themselves—and they live with their wives and children in parsonages, and enjoy the friendship, consideration, and confidence of their parishioners.

For many years Piana dei Greci was represented in the Italian Parliament by Signor Francesco Crispi, a native of Sicily. When it is remembered that Signor Crispi's predecessor and successor in office, Marquis di Rudini, is also a Sicilian, it will be understood why Sicily plays no small part in the drama of Italian politics.

When we entered Piana dei Greci the main street was crowded by people hurrying to services about to begin in all the churches. We made our way to the centre of the town, where, around a small fountain, was a crowd of women and young girls, dressed in gala costumes at once striking and original. Most interesting we found them, when we remembered that they were of the fashion which prevailed in far-off Albania late in the fifteenth century. The dress consists of a woollen petticoat and a bodice made of black or dark-colored silk, embroidered and otherwise adorned. Some of the women, in lieu of hoods, wear

bright neckerchiefs, which they fasten under their chins, allowing the borders to hang down over their shoulders. Others wear curious blue "nun's-bonnets," with deep capes. All were very neat and picturesque in their costumes of time-honored fashion. On great occasions, at christenings and weddings, many of the better class of women array themselves in silken gowns and vests embroidered in gold, with short, bright-colored sleeves similarly embellished, their arms covered with white muslin trimmed with lace. Others use corsages—always, be it understood, silk and gold embroidered—and chemises garnished with lace and many-colored silken bows, and tie their hair with gay ribbons, and wear, hanging down their backs, a "schepi," or veil. A "chezza," or coif, heavy with gold thread, is the distinctive head-dress of a bride on her wedding-day. Around their waists they clasp a "brejo," or belt, with massive silver buckles engraved and gilt. Sometimes these buckles are of great value, not only on account of the weight of metal used in making them, but because of the curious and artistic repoussé work, representing the Virgin or San Nicolo (the patron saints of the Albanian colonies), or St. George, or La Madonna d' Odigitria, the protectress of the town.

We followed a crowd of worshippers into one of the churches, where we were much interested in watching ceremonies that differed materially from the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. The grand altar stood out from the wall of the apse, and the minister placed himself on the farther side of it, facing the people. At that part of the mass when the "divine miracle of transubstantiation takes place," the priest, confront-

ing the audience, raised his right hand with two fingers extended, and stood in the attitude in which Byzantine artists were wont to depict Christ in the act of blessing. Immediately chimes were set loudly ringing in different parts of the church, and a man stationed on the front porch beat upon a drum, while the bells in the tower of the church were tolled clangorously. Men, women, and children made haste to enter the church, which in a few moments was packed to suffocation. When all the congregation had been gathered in, the drum ceased beating, the bells were silent, and the priest, taking the sacred chalice in his hands, marched down the middle aisle, followed by his assistants and the choristers; and, as he came, all the worshippers fell upon their knees and devoutly offered up petitions to the Father of All. It was a strange sight, all the stranger when the observances and ceremonies were compared with those we had witnessed the Sunday before in the great cathedral at Monreale.

After service we spent an hour or two sauntering about the town, visiting its churches, which we found to be uninteresting, decorated with tawdry pictures and cheap gilt bric-à-brac; there was nothing in any of them worth study or examination. It was a cold December day; little was to be seen of the people, who wrapped themselves closely in their capes, and the doors of the houses were kept closed. Only the better class of dwellings had panes of glass in their windows, and we saw not one vestige or suggestion of household comfort, as that word is understood in America and northern Europe. No arrangements are made to keep the houses warm or dry. There are no

fireplaces, and, as we have said, glass is but little used. The homes of the poor of this mountain city are bare, cheerless, dark, and dirty dens, in which prosperous farmers in America would not think of stabling their horses and cows. Strange to say, the children running about the streets looked healthy; they had ruddy cheeks and did not remind us of the emaciated babies and little ones we had seen in other towns. There was a general aspect and flavor of poverty and wretchedness about the place. The men were sullen in manner, and went about as if heavy of heart. The women, even those dressed in their Sunday costumes, looked sad and careworn. The atmosphere of the place was depressing. One was conscious of the prevalence of a general sentiment of discontent, of inarticulate resentment against the imagined authors of the misery, the oppressors of poverty-stricken, hopeless humanity. The snow fell almost constantly, the wind swept over the mountain-top and drove the mist through the narrow streets; therefore, long before our vetturino had made ready to set out on the homeward journey we had wearied of sight-seeing and longed to be gone from the town, the short list of whose attractions we had exhausted.

We did not know, until our return to Palermo, that had we applied to the proper person in authority we could have had arranged for us, with little trouble and delay, a marriage service. We regretted that we had not told the proprietor of the Hôtel des Palmes of our intention to visit Piana dei Greci.

“Had you told me you expected to be in Piana dei Greci, I should have telephoned to the sindaco, and he would have arranged for a marriage ceremony to

be held in the church; then you would have seen something to repay you for your trouble in taking so long a ride on so inclement a day."

"Do they keep engaged couples in Piana dei Greci, so that marriages can be celebrated for the entertainment of travellers?" we wonderingly inquired. Our host made answer:

"I suppose very often couples who cannot make up their minds to go to church to have the knot tied fast by the priest are influenced by the fact that guests of my hotel are willing to pay a small fee to the clergyman and give something to the bride and groom to enable them to set up their own household gods." Truly, the misery of the people of this mountain town must be great when, for a small fee, young men and maidens are willing to assume the cares and responsibilities of married life.

## XVI

### ALONG THE NORTH SHORE

The Coast-line—The Madonian Mountains—La Mafia—Termini—Himera—The Sacrifice of Hamilcar—"The Happy Fields"—Cefalù.

THERE are some things that are worth doing for themselves alone. The railway journey from Palermo eastward to Cefalù, a distance of forty miles along the northern shore of Sicily, is worth taking if for no other reason than to obtain the magnificent views into valleys opening to the south of the railway, which give one some idea, at least, of the grandeur of the Madonian mountains. The line skirts the Tyrrhenian Sea. Indescribably fine are the prospects of wide bays embraced by promontories towering from the water, of long, sweeping beaches and broad meadow-lands, of crags crowned with quaint ruins of castles and watch-towers. Down by the shore are towns, strangely mediæval in appearance, little cities whose history goes back to the age of fable; fields and the banks of streams where battles were fought between Greeks and Carthaginians; headlands that have given their names to naval combats, fought when conquering Romans made good their boast to rule the waves.

Through this country we journeyed one winter's morning, having taken our departure from Palermo an

hour before sunrise. When day broke we were at Bagheria, anciently called Vaccaria, settled ages ago by prisoners escaped from the galleys; therefore we may well believe that in some sort the old town deserved its bad repute. It was alleged to have been a place where murders were frequent and where the people, easily stirred to violence, constantly engaged in political, religious, and private feuds. Be this as it may, until the middle of this century Bagheria was none the less the favorite resort of Sicilian noblemen, many of whom built palaces and resided there during the summer months.

Beyond Bagheria we crossed the highest point of the isthmus which connects Cape Catalfano with the mainland, and caught a backward glimpse of Palermo and Monte Pellegrino, barely discernible in the shadows of night. Before us we beheld the beautiful Bay of Termini, the surface of which reflected the deep crimson of the clouds, foretelling the rising sun. It was a frosty morning, the air exhilarating, the atmosphere transparent, although in the zenith and towards the west the heavens were hidden by an unbroken canopy of clouds. We could see distinctly for immense distances; the blackness of the clouds served to intensify the colored light which illumined sea and land. All the atmospheric effects, the exceeding darkness of shadows, the marvellous brilliancy of bands and rays of light that shot across the sky, were startling in their intensity. As the sun arose the sea became radiant, iridescent, and on shore the spectacle was no less wonderful. Every mountain, rock, grove, orchard, seemed to hold dormant light, inexhaustible stores of color, that awaited but the magic touch of the sun to awaken

AN ANCIENT WELL

UN



in wonderful illumination. It was a marvellous spectacle of a new day dawning upon a fair world. On a height overlooking the plain and the sea we beheld the ruins of Casteldaccia, an old Norman fortress; and on all the headlands square, battlemented watch-towers, picturesque and legend-inspiring reminders of the day when the pirate Barbarossa and other "water-rats" infested the Sicilian main.

Near Trabia, a station we had passed after leaving Altavilla, a most extraordinary murder was committed a few years ago in a first-class carriage, while the train to Palermo was in motion between the two towns. That an ex-mayor of Palermo was assassinated there can be no doubt, for his body was found in the compartment, literally hacked to pieces with twenty-three wounds. He was director of the Banca Siciliana, but he was not known to be in the habit of carrying large sums of money on his person; he was a politician, but was not a man who made personal enemies while in office nor during the contests incident to his elections. No cause has ever been assigned for the murder, no theory has ever been established which reasonably accounts for the crime. His body was not robbed; his purse and watch were found upon him. There were abundant evidences that the victim did not give up his life without a terrible struggle in self-defence; but to this day the criminal or criminals, whoever they may have been, remain undetected. In default of all explanations of the crime, people dismissed the subject from consideration, and, when spoken to, mysteriously shrugged the shoulders, or whispered the portentous word "Mafia." Such crimes, committed almost under the nose of the police, undoubtedly

strengthen the grip La Mafia holds upon the imagination of timorous citizens in Sicily; and yet, when you ask them "What is this Mafia?" they glance uneasily over the left shoulder, raise the eyebrows, and change the subject of conversation.\*

Twenty-three miles from Palermo we came to Termini, a town of twenty-four thousand inhabitants, which occupies the site of *Thermæ Himerensis*, the hot-springs of Himera, fabled to have been shown by the nymphs to Hercules, who bathed and refreshed himself here after his wrestling bout with Eryx. For many years Himera on the north and Selinus on the south coast of Sicily were the outposts of the Greeks, who ceaselessly contended with the Carthaginians and their Elymian allies for the possession of the western third of the island. In 480 B.C. Hamilcar, one of the *Shophetim* of Carthage, landed at Panormus, and, having marched his army to Himera, pitched two camps, one close to the sea, the other on the hill above the town. On a day "commonly said to have been the same as that of the Battle of Salamis in old Greece," † the Sicilian generals Theron and Gelon utterly destroyed the expedition of Hamilcar. According to the tradition current at Carthage, which we may read in Herodotus, Hamilcar stood on the top of a hill all day long, apart from the battle, as did Moses when Israel overcame the hosts of Amalek. In vain Hamilcar sacrificed to his gods. At evening, seeing his army cut to pieces, he threw himself, as a supreme sacrifice, into the fire upon the altar. By

\* For account of La Mafia, see Appendix.

† E. A. FREEMAN. *Sicily*.

this victory at Himera, Sicily was saved from the Carthaginian invader, as by the triumph of the Greek navy at Salamis old Greece was saved from the Persians.

Very interesting in many ways is Termini, the old seaport town, notable as the birthplace of Agathocles, the bloodiest of Sicilian tyrants. As one wanders about its streets, here and there are to be discovered hints and reminders of many different epochs of its long history: a fragment of a Corinthian cornice embedded in the wall of La Chiesa Matrice; curious frescos and inscriptions in Santa Catarina, which also has a pointed arched doorway; San Jacopo exhibits a very ancient campanile, and on the walls of San Francesco, an old and venerable edifice, there are patches of curious stone-carving. In the museum is a marble torso said to be part of a statue of Sthenius, who was immortalized by Cicero for his patriotic and successful opposition to the extortions and rapacity of Verres. But there is really little left of the old town: a few fragments of mosaic pavements; the foundations of a Roman basilica and amphitheatre have been found by excavating in its suburbs; and there are to be seen vestiges of the *Aqua Cornelia*, an aqueduct that brought abundant supplies of water to the town in Roman times and for many centuries thereafter. Time and weather have dealt hardly with Termini, and little remains to it of its former wealth, except the pure water of its springs, the use of which, it is said, gives a delicate flavor to the macaroni for which this town is celebrated.

The railway runs east from Termini, crossing broad meadow-lands, and at six miles passes a solitary farm

on the west bank, and near the mouth of Il Fiume Grande. It marks the site of ancient Himera, "the far-ruling city," as Pindar calls the metropolis of which Termini was a colony and the outpost in Greek and Carthaginian times. An olive-orchard covers a lofty mound where Hamilcar sacrificed in vain to Baal, while his soldiers warred with the conquering Greeks on the plain below. On that same height Hannibal Giskon, the destroyer of Selinus, sacrificed three thousand of the male inhabitants of Himera, to avenge the disgrace and death of his grandfather, Hamilcar.

Crossing Il Fiume Grande the railway passes through vast fields of artichokes and plantations of sumach. For hundreds of yards along the side of the railway grow hedges of geranium; and, although there is snow on all the mountains, and some patches of it on the lowlands by the sea-shore, masses of scarlet blossoms gleam in the sunshine, a delight to the eye, that also finds much delectable food in the light green of the leaves, which contrasts pleasantly with the sombre shades of genesta and fantastic prickly-pear.

Campofelice gives the name "Happy Fields" to wide downs stretching between the Madonian mountains and the sea, and the view up the valley of Il Fiume Grande discloses fertile hill-sides and intervalles, above which tower Monte San Salvatore and Pizzo Antenna, both of them over six thousand feet in height, the latter the loftiest peak of the range. On Gibelmanna are groves of "frassino," the manna-tree, relics of Saracen times, for the Moslems introduced them into Sicily from Africa, where trees transplanted from Arabia flourished and multiplied under the care of

Arab husbandmen. Another reminder of Arab days are the irrigating wells, from which water is raised by an endless series of buckets, operated by means of clumsy wooden machinery, mostly Oriental, Asiatic, certainly not European in appearance, but picturesque, as commonplace things are likely to be when ancient, moss-grown, festooned with vines, and decked with flowers.

From the crest of the isthmus connecting the mountains with a lofty promontory, on which are the ruins of a watch-tower ornamented with arabesques and Moorish windows, we caught sight of "The Headland" (Kephale), so called by the Greeks, who named the town which lies under its cliffs Cephalaedium—Cefalù of to-day. The headland rises from the sea in terraces to a broad platform, on which are the ruins of a mighty castle which has never yet been taken by sea attack or land assault. Close against the cliffs an old cathedral lifts its twin towers, and the houses of Cefalù gather around it like sheep about their shepherd. The town stands with its back against the wall of rock, and many a desperate fight has it made in the tumultuous old times against the fleets of all comers. A very strong fortress and a sure refuge was the old castle; and so Cefalù remains to-day to tell its story, while others of the sea-coast towns of Sicily—Selinus, Naxos, Solous, and many more—are but heaps of crumbling ruins, hidden beneath dunes of shifting sand.

With Cefalù in sight we cross meadows and plantations, from which green slopes strewn with monster boulders rise gently to broken cliffs overgrown with ivy, aloes, and cacti, along the sea-face of which ex-

tends a row of white villas, shaded by cypresses, ilex, and date-palms. Wondering at everything, charmed by every prospect, we arrived at the end of our winter morning's pilgrimage, and in the early forenoon of a day in mid-winter alighted from the train at a pretty station, where morning-glories, geraniums, heliotropes, roses, and marigolds were blooming, reckless of the snow-flakes—Danaë's "Shower of Gold"—that fell across bands and streamers of sunlight breaking through rifts in the heavy clouds.

## XVII

### CEFALÙ

**An Ancient Sicel Town—Roger II.—His Escape from Shipwreck—Cefalù Cathedral—The Norman Bishop's Church—Its Rich Adornments—"The Finest Mosaics in the World."**

AN ancient Sicel town once occupied the site of Cefalù, the summit of the high rock that overhangs the sea. There are Sicel remains to be seen in the town and the foundations of the Sicel walls that formerly joined the city to its harbor defences. But Cephalaedium was a small place in Grecian times; Diodorus says it was only a castle, and in his time a dependency of Himera. Little or nothing is known of its history until 369 B.C., when Dionysius captured it from the Carthaginians. In 307 B.C. Agathocles occupied it. During the First Punic War the Romans were unable to reduce it, although they sent against it a fleet numbering two hundred and fifty vessels. The Saracens took possession of it in 858 A.D. These bare facts contain nearly all the information we have concerning Cefalù previous to the conquest of Sicily by the Normans.

In the summer of 1129 A.D. (not in 1105 A.D., nor yet in 1131 A.D., as is variously stated by different authorities), Cefalù suddenly became famous. King Roger II., on his return from Naples to Palermo, be-

ing overtaken by a fearful storm, was in danger of perishing by shipwreck. He vowed if he were brought in safety to land he would erect a cathedral to the honor of Christ and the Apostles on the spot where he first set his foot on shore. His admiral succeeded in making the harbor of Cefalù, where King Roger disembarked, beneath the western cliffs of the headland, and there he founded a church, which he dedicated to "St. George the Apostle." So good a knight as Roger may well be excused for numbering the doughty champion of Christendom among the Apostles. The Church of St. George, falling into ruin, was rebuilt by citizens and renamed San Leonardo. Two years later, mindful of his vow still unfulfilled, Roger began the erection of a cathedral, undoubtedly the most magnificent sanctuary that had been built in Sicily since the days when Greek architects reared the beautiful Doric temples at Segesta, Agragas, and in other parts of the island.

Around the wonderful cathedral, during its construction and when it was finished, there grew up a flourishing town, a favorite resort of the Norman kings and of great church dignitaries. For many years the see of Cefalù took precedence of all other Sicilian ecclesiastical establishments, until the time of William the Good, when the see of Monreale was created and its archbishop endowed with superior dignities.

The cathedral stands with its back to the rock of Cefalù, on a platform approached by a pyramidal flight of twenty steps. The edifice assumes gigantic proportions if compared with the relatively low houses of the city. It dominates the surrounding scene, and

SICILIAN PEASANTS





the beholder is at once impressed by the fact that the town was built for the cathedral—not the cathedral for the town. Like that of Monreale, the Cathedral of Cefalù is in the form of a Latin cross, perfect and complete in all its principal parts. Like Monreale, it has a nave, side aisles, and transepts, and three apses at the east end. At the corners of an imposing façade stand two square towers, four stories in height, surmounted by square cupolas with high, peaked roofs. The west front is exceedingly plain, and consists of a portico between the two towers, the upper parts of which are ornamented with a series of interlacing arches with chevron mouldings. Cefalù Cathedral is the most interesting, historically, of all the churches in the island; it is the earliest of Norman-Sicilian churches, and was closely copied by the architects who designed the basilicas erected later at Monreale and elsewhere.

As one enters the church he is impressed by the grandeur and solemnity of its interior, due to its noble proportions and the grace of the stilted and pointed arches that spring grandly from the walls and columns. The pointed vaulting of the nave and aisles is supported by fifteen columns of granite and one of cipollino, with graceful capitals, that were undoubtedly brought from some pre-existing Greek building to decorate the interior of this graceful church. The interior is somewhat sombre in character, for only the walls of the chancel and apse are incrustated with mosaics. As in Monreale, La Martorana, and La Palatina, the central apse contains a half-length colossal figure of Christ, clothed in a mantle of blue with a tunic of gold—Christ, the Priest, the King, the Master

of the World, who raises His hand to bless; the Light of the World, the God of a triumphant race, the Protector of warrior kings. In His left hand He holds an open book, on the pages of which are the words "Ego Sum Lux Mundi." The space between the dome of the apse and the wainscoting of white marble that surrounds the choir is entirely filled with mosaics divided into three zones. In the centre of the highest zone, that below "The Christ," is a colossal full-length figure of the Virgin, and standing on her right and left hand are four archangels with outstretched wings, wonderful figures, draped in dalmatics richly embellished with precious stones. Immediately below these are ten Apostles, and the two Evangelists St. Mark and St. Luke. The walls at the side of the apse are incrustated in four zones corresponding with those of the hemicycle. The highest zone, on the gospel side, contains representations of Melchisedec and certain prophets, and below these again are eight saints. On the epistle side, Abraham, David, Solomon, and seven of the prophets appear, and below them eight other saints.

The greater part of the mosaics in Cefalù Cathedral belong to an earlier period than those in Monreale. Professor Bonanno Zuccaro, who is charged by the Ministry of Public Instruction with the care of the mosaics at Cefalù and other churches in Sicily, is our authority for the statement that the mosaics in question are in a better state of preservation, as they are of a higher class of work, than the best specimens to be found elsewhere, not even excepting those in La Martorana, La Palatina, or in St. Mark's in Venice, or in Il Battistero degli Ortodossi in Ravenna.

Travellers who have seen only the mosaics in St. Peter's and elsewhere in Rome can form no conception of the wonderful results to be achieved by artists who not only knew how to design, but also were able to realize their ideas of interior decoration when actually working at what is to-day a lost art, for just as the Gobelins tapestries of to-day offend against one's idea of what should be and should not be attempted by workers in woollen threads, so do the mosaics of St. Peter's, for instance, violate the canons of mosaic art. Like the present-day tapestries, the mosaics in St. Peter's are bad imitations of oil paintings. They certainly are not mosaics in the art-meaning of the term. Those who have not beheld the pictorial mosaics of Sicily, of Cefalù in particular, can form no idea of the artistic beauty and perfection of workmanship attained by the unknown artists who embellished the churches and palaces of King Roger II. and his art-loving descendants.

The nave and aisles of the cathedral are unembellished, the walls are bare, flat surfaces of white plaster, and where the latter has fallen the rough stones are exposed to view, but the vast expanse of the interior, its fine lines and proportions, lend a dignity and grace that cause one to forget the nakedness and lack of superficial ornaments. It is impossible to describe all the beauties of this magnificent edifice, the cathedral in which King Roger intended his body should rest after death. He caused to be prepared, during his lifetime, two porphyry sarcophagi for himself and his queen, but when he died, in 1154 A.D., the disconsolate Palermitans declared that "so good, so dear, so great a king, so glorious a warrior, so wise

a statesman," would find a more appropriate resting-place in the capital city of the kingdom he had carved out for himself with his sword, amid the people whose good fortune it was to have been conquered by "Roger the Magnanimous." And so King Roger sleeps in the Cathedral of Palermo, which his grandson, William the Good, dedicated to the Holy Virgin.

## XVIII

### RAMBLES ABOUT CEFALÙ

La Porta Garibaldi—La Via Libertà—Cloisters of Cefalù—A Cefalù "Trattoria"—Along the Water-front—Diana and Actæon—"Il Trovatore."

WE had entered Cefalù by La Porta Garibaldi. In what town of Sicily is there not a Porta or a Via named after the popular idol, who, whatever may be said of the rites celebrated in the churches, is indeed worshipped in spirit and in truth by Sicilians of all kinds and conditions?

From La Porta Garibaldi, La Via Libertà leads to Il Corso Ruggiero, where we found a "trattoria," which we entered, intending to break our fast. Only a very hungry traveller will be nerved to attempt the bills of fare of any "ristorante" in Cefalù. We ventured to order coffee, "pasta con pomodoro," a "pasticcio," and "pastelli." In a country where a very bad imitation of Mocha costs at least three and a half lire (about seventy cents American money) a pound, one must not hope to regale oneself royally with "demitasses" of a concoction that is coffee in nothing but color. The pasta was good; the pastry was we know not what, for when our hostess's back was turned we gave it to two shivering boys who stood at the door of the trattoria chanting "Muore di fame, signori."

On the walls of the trattoria were two flaming-colored posters. We had seen their like before in America—gaudy chromo-lithographs, one of a popular variety actress, well known to the frequenters of the concert-saloons and summer gardens of the American metropolis, and one of the race for the Brooklyn Handicap at the spring meeting at Sheepshead Bay. It was startling to come upon two such reminders of joyous life in the New World—America, of which the average Sicilian has such strange and untaught ideas, believing, for instance, that because we came from New York we must needs know husbands, brothers, or sons, as the case might be, who, since their departure for Buenos Ayres or Valparaiso, had forgotten to write home to their wives, sisters, or mothers, who inquired of us about their kin beyond the sea. Sometimes the eager questioner could not keep back tears when we gently told them we had no knowledge of those for whom they so anxiously inquired.

La padronessa of the trattoria had a brother in Baltimore engaged in the fruit business. Thinking that his sister, who was “molto intelligente,” would be pleased to see the portrait of a typical “Americana,” and interested in forming an idea of American scenery, he had sent the two chromo-lithographs to her, and a letter in which he stated that he was well acquainted with “la signora,” and diligently patronized the race-track, the like of which was not to be seen in his native Sicily, and where he sold many oranges to “Americani ricchi.”

From La Piazza del Duomo we descended a narrow, ill-paved, filthy lane to the sea-wall, along which we proceeded, studying the quaint façades of old build-

ings that reminded us more of the houses we had seen in Spanish seaports than those of Naples and the other Italian towns we had visited. On the gravel beach, between the piers and breakwaters, were many fishing-smacks of different odd rigs, xebecs, "feluccas," "speroneras," some of which had been beached high and dry above the surf, while others were being berthed in very rude and primitive cradles running on ship railways, operated by gangs of sailors working windlasses that seemed old enough to have served the mariners who drew up King Roger's fleet upon this same beach centuries ago. Sicilian fishermen of to-day employ the same forms of machinery, operated in the self-same way, that their Saracen and Norman ancestors thought so ingenious and labor-saving. It is doubtful if a people that still use wooden ploughs, such as were used in Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs, have in any manner improved on the machinery employed by the sailors of Homeric times, or by Carthaginian mariners in careening their vessels. The craft were as ancient-looking as the machinery used to beach them, round-bodied, full-breasted, clumsy hulks, with broad sterns and great rudder-posts, and tillers overtopping their poop-decks. The hawse-holes of the more venerable specimens were painted to give them the appearance of human eyes, and from the sides of these vessels projected lee-boards like the two fins of a vast sea-monster. Certain of the smaller craft had been careened on the sands, and caulkers were drumming a lively tune with their mallets. Pitch-kettles boiling over fires of driftwood sent up plumes of inky smoke to mingle with the dark clouds which now and again discharged themselves in

eddying gusts of snow. It was all picturesque, quaint, and interesting, so suggestive, so realistic, in fact, of old, old times, old habits, ancient fashions of 'long-shore life. And the mariners themselves, in aspect, manners, and costumes were as old-fashioned, queer, and curious as the subjects of the rude pictures preserved to us from mediæval ages. Of the Italian cast of countenance we saw almost no examples, nor could we distinguish any that resembled the Spanish type. Arabs and Berbers we saw, and fair-haired Normans, ruddy and blue-eyed, some with curly hair and gray or brown eyes; Northmen, descendants of the sailors that drew their ship ashore at Cefalù when Roger escaped shipwreck, more than seven hundred years ago.

From the careening-place we followed a street running parallel to the sea—a thoroughfare, to judge by the appearance of the buildings on both sides of it, that formerly had been the resort of the merchants of a once prosperous seaport town. We came to where a stream of water, bursting from a wall, fell into a pool below the roadway, and thence found its way across the street, to plunge into a stone basin at one side of a small court. From the court a semicircular flight of stone steps led up to the street, and an arched gateway opened to a narrow close that descended to the sea-beach. Around the marble coping of this reservoir was a crowd of men, women, and children, all engaged in washing household rags and tattered garments. It was an industrious, noisy company, gossiping, quarrelling; it stared defiantly at us, the "forestieri," passed remarks about us, and with one consent began to solicit alms. The group around the foun-

A MILKMAID





tain did not present a picturesque or an agreeable spectacle; the day was bitterly cold, the water in the reservoir dirty, soapy; the court decidedly sloppy; the washermen and washerwomen were ragged, wet, bedraggled, and beyond the hope of soap to cleanse them. All were barearmed and barelegged, but of rounded figures or shapeliness of limb there was but a beggarly display. One little girl stood in the icy water flowing through the conduit beneath the arch washing a pair of stockings. She was a very pretty child, as Sicilian children are apt to be, and she laughed and frankly stared at the stranger, the Actæon who had invaded the precincts of her bath. Snugly wrapped in his overcoat, Actæon shivered to see the nymph standing in the bitterly cold water, in the roaring draught that carried the snow-flakes into the gloomy gateway. The nymph pouted her lips, and with a childish disregard of the weight of words mourned plaintively "Muore di fame, signori," and put out her soapy little hand for a soldo; receiving which, she climbed out of her bath and stood revealed "a nut-brown maid," cowering and trembling in the biting gale. Then, all untoweled as she was, she donned her one little garment, a tattered frock of bright crimson cotton, and, it is to be presumed in order to dry them, drew on her wet, ragged stockings; and nobody but Actæon seemed to entertain the idea that nymphs ever died of croup or pneumonia.

We left the town by La Porta Giudecca and followed a road that led us around the landward face of the rock of Cefalù. Above us were battlemented cliffs, the castle-crowned heights of the headland once as inexpugnable as Gibraltar in the old days of Spanish

virility and national prowess. Heaps of ruins—of towers, keeps, bastions, and curtain walls—lay tumbled about, the débris hardly to be distinguished from the vast confusion, the ruin of the time-worn, crumbling mountain. Looking east from the highest point of the neck of land that connects “the head” with the shoulder of mainland, we beheld the shore as far as Cape Orlando, sixty kilometers away. Looking west, we could see Monte Pellegrino towering above Palermo, distant fifty kilometers; and in the northeast, far out at sea, Volcano, Lipari, Salina, Filicuri, and Alicuri, five of the seven Lipari Islands, the ancient Isles of Æolus, uplifted their heads from the tempest-tossed Mediterranean. To the south and east the Madonian mountains reared stupendous snow-crowned peaks, and when the flurries of snow ceased we discovered all the country-side, and here and there white towns, framed in sombre greens and grays—Collesano, where are the remains of walls of an unguessed age; Calto-vulturo, the Kalat - Abi - Thaur of Saracenic times, which Roger II. bestowed upon his daughter Matilda; Polizzi “La Generosa,” seated on its pinnacle, more than three thousand feet above sea-level, near the springs from which flow the two great rivers of Sicily. We saw also Petralia di Sotto and Petralia di Sopra looking down from their unscalable heights, and Gangi perched two thousand eight hundred feet in mid-air. We were especially interested, however, not to say startled, when our guide pointed out to us the ill-omened town of Santo Mauro Castelverde, beyond Castelbuono, where the brigands we had seen on their trial in the Corte d’ Assiso in Palermo made their lair, as precious a pack of villains as ever served the devil

since his satanic majesty made his first appearance in Sicily under the name of Dædalus.

Marvelling at all this grand panorama, now gazing at the mountains, now out to sea, now surveying the coast east and west for eighty or one hundred miles, we almost forgot the fact that snow was falling; that the thermometer indicated most un-Sicilian weather. We at length were driven to seek shelter under the lee of the ruins of an old watch-tower, where we found a very old man. So stooped and infirm was he, so thin, so weak, it seemed impossible he could stay out in the weather and not perish of cold. He arose as we approached him, bowing obsequiously, making motions as if he were doffing his hat. He wore a very ragged and faded cappa, the cloak and capote, which is the prevailing fashion of winter garments all over Sicily. To our surprise he did not beg, nor did he tell us he was dying of hunger, although he looked most like to be of all the woe-begone humanity we had seen that bitter winter day. He said something in Sicilian to our guide, who translated to us the old man's inquiry:

"Did I Signori wish to hear some poetry? Might he be permitted, in God's name, to recite to the strangers the wonderful poem of the birth and crucifixion of the Christ?"

Permission being granted him, the old man threw back the hood of his cappa and stood bareheaded, clasping his hands in front of him. The forestieri regretted that ignorance of the Sicilian language prevented them from understanding much of the story, which was recited in monotone, as if the old man were praying aloud. It could hardly be said that he in-

toned the lines, nor did he sing or chant them. He spoke in a gentle, melodious voice, slightly accenting the rhymes and preserving the rhythm of the composition. It took him three or four minutes to repeat the verses, which he did with but one momentary hesitation, as if he were recalling a word that had slipped his memory. In all, he recited between two hundred and two hundred and fifty lines, each couplet of which rhymed. When he made an end our guide complimented him in our name, and asked him to recite other verses. This he willingly did, choosing a story from the "Chronicles of the Crusaders," and again he continued to repeat verses for the space of four or five minutes. During his recitations he stood as if wrapped in thought, bareheaded, forgetful of the weather and, seemingly, of our presence. The performance was not a mere repetition of lines by rote, for, although there was little variation in accent or tone, he seemed to speak as if his mind were fixed on the ideas he was expressing. The tale of the Crusade finished, we gave him whatever it may have been, and again requested our guide to ask him to recite other numbers of his repertoire. Informing us that he would give us the story of the "Landing of Ruggiero and the Building of the Cathedral at Cefalù," he began in a louder and more inspiring tone, and repeated the lines more vigorously and with finer expression, using certain modest gestures. The tale of King Roger was longer than either of the other two recitations, and, when he had finished it, the old man, pointing eagerly in the direction of the town, told our guide to say to the strangers "that there!—there, was the very city King Ruggiero had visited,

there the cathedral he had built in honor of the Christ."

How were the mighty fallen! From the shoulders of the disciples of Ciullio d' Alcamo, the favorites of kings, the pets of fortune, the mantle of minstrelsy had fallen on the bowed shoulders of this starved and woe-begone old man whom we found on a bitter Sicilian winter day cowering under the ruins of an ancient Norman keep.

"Blow, blow! thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude."

## XIX

### THROUGH FRA DIAVOLO'S COUNTRY

To Corleone—Village of the Emirs—Roccabianca, "Castle of Diana"—Baths of Gefalà—Chiarastillo Mountains—Fra Diavolo, "The Prince of Brigands"—His Betrayal and Death.

THE railway from Palermo to Corleone runs eastwardly close to the sea for about four miles to "The Point of the Corsairs," then, bending to the south, ascends the valley of the Scanzano, passing Misilmeri, a town of Saracenic origin, as its Arabic name *Menzil-al-Amir* (the Village of the Emirs) abundantly testifies.

Beyond Roccabianca we catch sight of the Castle of Diana, of which a grand, square tower and battlemented walls remain standing on the summit of a vast mound rising before a background of snow-covered mountains. Below *Castello di Diana* are the hot-baths of Gefalà, which the Greeks believed were discovered by the omniscient *Dædalus*; but which, according to the early Christians, were set flowing by that mysterious anchorite *St. Kalogeros*, who has given his name to two mountains in western Sicily. The Saracens called the baths Gefalà, and set great store by the healing properties of the water, which flows in abundance from never-failing sources.

The railway passes onward below the treeless, barren flank of a range of rocky mountains known as Chiarastillo, once upon a time the favorite haunt of the renowned Fra Diavolo. At a height of two thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea, we entered one of the wildest and least explored mountain regions of Sicily, and all the land was lonely, forsaken, with never a house in sight. The mountains were heaped and piled in vast confusion, their summits inaccessible, the valleys between them uncanny lurking-places of shadows, abodes of one could not divine what mysterious beings, human or supernatural. What wonder that Dædalus, "that thief of the world," was said to haunt about this huge wilderness; that here Diana was fabled to have her favorite hunting-grounds; that here, in the early days of the nineteenth century, Fra Diavolo lurked in safety, defying pursuit, for years setting at naught all efforts of the military to capture him, until he was finally betrayed into the hands of his enemies by one of his own faithless companions. That he should have remained at liberty so long, notwithstanding the fact that there was a great price set upon his head, can be readily understood when the impenetrable nature of the country is taken into consideration.

Fra Diavolo, or, as he was christened, Antonio Borzetta, and his brother Ambrozio were born about the end of the last or the beginning of this century, in Carini, the native city of Laïs, the mistress of Alcibiades. The father of the lads was a small proprietor, but he was unable to check the inbred natural propensities for evil-doing that grew with the growth of his two sons and strengthened with their strength. While

still a callow youth Antonio Borzetta made himself notorious by a series of lawless escapades which brought him under the penalties of the law. Being arrested for petty crimes, he escaped from jail and fled to the mountains of Chiarastillo, where, in six months, he gained the reputation for wild and reckless defiance of all authority from which he received his "nom de guerre," "Fra Diavolo." For years he haunted the mountain fastnesses, where one man, posted on a narrow pinnacle of rock, or at the head of a steep and narrow defile, might safely defy a whole company of soldiers ignorant of the topography of the place.

In despair of being unable to rid the world of so talented a strategist and so busy a villain, the authorities of Palermo readily listened to the proposition of Mario Granata, of Misilmeri, a member of Fra Diavolo's band, who was serving a life-sentence in prison, to deliver Fra Diavolo alive or dead into the hands of the soldiers as the price of his (Granata's) liberty. The faithless brigand, whose name is execrated to-day in the songs and stories which perpetuate the fame of the chief he betrayed, demanded of the viceroy money enough to purchase powder and ball. He also requested that his escape from prison should be connived at by his jailers, so that he might present himself before his "capo" as the hero of a desperate self-deliverance from prison. In accordance with his plans, Granata was allowed to escape, and, providing himself with ammunition, set out from Palermo on his dangerous and delicate mission.

Fra Diavolo's brother, Ambrozio, entertained suspicions of the wily Granata, which he communicated to the capo. To prove the sincerity of his lately escaped

SICILIAN (ARAB TYPE)



comrade, Fra Diavolo intrusted him with a considerable sum of money with which to purchase, in Misilmeri, supplies for the band. It was argued that if Granata was a true man and a trustworthy brigand, he would return to Chiarastillo with the purchased supplies ; if, on the other hand, he was dishonest enough to rob a robber, he would keep the money, as he would be able to do with safety to himself, for it was not illegal to steal from a brigand. Mario Granata faithfully performed his mission and returned to his chieftain, and from that moment enjoyed the full confidence of his unsuspecting comrades. Shortly after Granata rejoined Fra Diavolo he asked leave of absence for twelve hours to visit his wife. Fra Diavolo, suspecting no evil, granted the request, and the bandits continued their journey, expecting to be rejoined by Granata before they entered the defiles of Chiarastillo mountains. Granata did not come, and Fra Diavolo, ordering a halt, sent Vitali into the town of Villafrati to learn, if possible, what had become of their missing companion. Vitali entered the town, and, as it was the Day of Annunciation, attended mass and listened to a sermon preached by a Capuchin father, after which he left the church and resumed his rambles for the purpose of gaining the information he was seeking. He discovered the presence in the town of a force of gendarmerie, an extraordinary spectacle, which convinced him that the authorities were on the tracks of Fra Diavolo and his band. He set out for the mountains, but was captured by troops who had been placed in ambush by the viceroy, according to the advice given him by Granata. The captain of the battalion demanded of Vitali what he was doing

in the mountains. The latter replied that he was engaged in gathering simples for an apothecary and botanical specimens for one of the professors of the University of Palermo.

While the soldiers were consulting what had best be done with their captive, Vitali made a bold dash for liberty, and, although fired upon by the troops, succeeded in escaping, and later rejoined his fellow-brigands, to whom he recounted his adventures. The band attempted to escape from the toils that had been woven around them, but were driven back to the mountains by the military, who had completely surrounded the district known to be haunted by Fra Diavolo and his merry men. At a signal the troops advanced, and after four hours of desultory firing, during which the brigands offered a desperate defence, the object of the expedition was assured. Late in the afternoon the soldiers carried into Villafrati the body of Fra Diavolo, who, to save himself from capture, had shot himself in the head at the moment when the soldiers were about to lay hands on him. In the encounter two or three soldiers were killed and a gendarme and one of the brigands wounded. The pastor of the church at Villafrati repaired to the mountains to shrive the dying. All the members of Fra Diavolo's band who were not killed were taken prisoners. Ambrozio and Vitali, who could have saved themselves, but who had wished to die with their comrades, were captured, taken to Carini, Fra Diavolo's native town, and shot. They died game. As Ambrozio was being led from Carini to the place of execution, followed by the entire population of the town, he remarked to his executioners: "My mother

lost nothing by not making me a priest. Whatever reputation for sanctity I might have earned in holy orders would never have entitled me to the chief place at the head of so great a procession as this which follows me to-day."

The corpse of Fra Diavolo was decapitated. His head, preserved in boiling vinegar, was sent to the Viceroy of Palermo, who sent it back to Carini, where it was exposed to public view in an iron cage. Thus perished one of the most renowned brigands of modern times, Fra Diavolo, whose name lives in song and story, recalling the shady celebrity of Claude Duval and Jack Sheppard, so famous in the annals of English criminology. It is not true, as has been alleged by some chroniclers, that the Fra Diavolo in question was the hero so well known to the opera-going public. Auber's Fra Diavolo did not visit Sicily, but confined his operations to the mountains within a radius of fifty miles of Mount Vesuvius. He, too, was a romantic villain, whose story lends itself to drama and music, and it will be remembered that it was his love for a sweetheart, known in the opera as Zerlina, that brought the Italian Fra Diavolo within range of the guns of Neapolitan troops. The Sicilian Fra Diavolo was no less susceptible to female charms than was his Italian prototype, but he bestowed his favors liberally and somewhat indiscriminately, as we may surmise from the fact that of many of the towns in the Chiarastillo mountains it is affirmed that in each of them Fra Diavolo Borzetta, of Carini, left a sweetheart, if not a widow, to mourn his loss.

Talking of Fra Diavolo reminds us that when we had bidden good-bye to Palermo and were on our way

to Girgenti we passed Lercara, a town rendered notable by the fact that its environs were the scene of two as pretty comedies as ever were enacted by good-natured travellers supported by a stock company of heavy villains possessed of a nice sense of humorous and dramatical possibilities. In 1876 an English resident of Palermo was captured by brigands while visiting his properties near Lercara. René Bazin must be our authority for the statement that Mr. John Foster Rose was released after some days of captivity on the payment of a ransom of sixty-five thousand lire. That Mr. Rose was not treated with undue severity during his sequestration we may well believe, for the same author states that "This rich foreigner, a man of spirit, who cherishes no rancor against Sicilians on account of his picturesque adventure, will certify to you, if need be, that during the twenty days of his captivity he had his coffee and daily newspaper for breakfast." \*

The Baron Sgadero, another victim of the band that "held up" Mr. Rose, was even more considerately treated than was the Englishman. The brigands who captured him respectfully kissed the baron's hand and apologized for the trouble they were giving him. Nevertheless, the prisoner was kept closely guarded for eight days in a cavern, but every attention was paid him as became a man of his quality. Upon his release he willingly testified before the judges of Il Corte d' Assiso of Palermo that he would have had nothing to complain of if it had not been that each day of his captivity in Il Bosco San Onofrio had cost him "la bagatella," to wit, "fifteen thousand eight hundred and seventy-five lire."

\* RENÉ BAZIN. *Sicile.*

## XX

### CORLEONE

**Mezzojuso—An Albanian Town—Rocca Busambra—Il Bosco di Ficuzza—Corleone—A Sicilian Locanda—"The King of Mexico"—"The Annals of the Poor."**

FROM Villafrati the railway winds along the side of a deep valley, across which we beheld the town of Mezzojuso, seated at the foot of cliffs, enormous buttresses and boulders, the ruined wall of Rocca Busambra. Had time permitted we should have ventured upon an excursion to this most curious place, notwithstanding the warnings we received that it would be utterly impossible for us to entertain the idea of resting, even for a few minutes, in the albergo, if indeed there were one in the poverty-stricken town.

Mensiuso, as it is called in Sicilian (in Arabic, *Menzil-Jusuph, i. e., "Joseph's Village"*), was once a Saracen settlement; it is now, and has been since 1498, an Albanian colony. It was colonized, as were the other Albanian towns in Sicily, by Christian refugees from Turkish tyranny who followed Giorgio Castriota (better known as Scanderbeg) into involuntary exile to escape death, and worse than death, at the hands of their Moslem oppressors. John II., father of Ferdinand the Catholic, granted lands to the refugees, and set aside for their habitation certain cities—twenty-

three in Calabria and four in Sicily—where they established themselves, and, having acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope, were permitted to exercise their own religion according to the ritual of the Orthodox Greek Church.

No scenery is wilder or more rugged than that which presents itself to view after the train leaves the station where passengers for Mezzojuso alight. To the west of the town, beyond the valley, the depths of which are but little cultivated, rises Rocca Busambra, a long range of bare, serrated, gray rock over five thousand feet in height and several miles in length, having the contour of an enormous letter S, resembling the body of a vast saurian, ribbed, plated, and greaved—an infinite lizard, a plesiosaurus, showing its horrid head, its crested neck, its back, above a chaos of rocks. We could fancy that the beast had crawled from its lair amid the mass of mountains rising behind it, in its progress crushing like grass the trees of the forest of Ficuzza, that grow close to its stupendous flanks. Crouched prone upon the earth, its long neck stretched out to its full length, projecting its crocodile-shaped head, the chimera stealthily creeps, joint by joint, upon its prey. One is reminded of how—

“ Leviathan

Hugest of living creatures on the Deep,  
Stretcht like a Promontorie, sleeps or swimmes,  
And seems a moving land.”

About the neck and head of Rocca Busambra spreads the Royal Domain of Ficuzza, one of the two or three so-called forests of Sicily. English and German guide-books call it “a dense forest of ilex,

birch, and cork trees." Trees there are, and of the kinds named, but the trees of Il Bosco di Ficuzza no more make a forest, in the American acceptation of the word, than the proverbial swallow makes a summer. The birches, ilex, and chestnut trees are not large, nor do they grow close together; and except for the unevenness of the ground and the roughness of it, a gunner might pursue his journey through Ficuzza with greater ease than through the woods that shade the banks of the upper Hudson or the pleasant groves that clothe the foot-hills of the Catskills.

Ficuzza, a forest for many generations, was enlarged at the expense of the cattle-raisers and farmers by William the Bad, the Norman King of Sicily, who, like William Rufus of England, recked not what settlements and villages he obliterated in making royal forests, royal wildernesses, where kings and nobles might follow the chase. In the good old times, the life of even small game was held in higher esteem than the lives of the miserable peasants, whom any man of condition might slay at his sweet will, when he pleased, and where he fell in with them, knowing full well that serfs of the soil were not protected by law, and that there was no "close season" for common men—mere hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Beyond Il Bosco di Ficuzza we came again to wheat-lands and treeless hills, and saw perched on knolls and on summits of giant rocks ruins of castles and watch-towers, relics of the old days when the husbandman was armed with sword and spear as he drove his team afield, when granaries must needs be fortresses if he that sowed would garner his crop. Winding around the head and fore-front of Rocca Bu-

sambra, the train descended in wide, sweeping curves, describing horseshoes and almost complete loops as it found its way down into the valley of Il Fiume Donna Beatrice, crossing which it mounted again, and shortly arrived at the present terminus of the railroad, the City of Corleone.

Whatever else we might have gone out "into the wilderness for to see," it certainly was not Corleone. We had made the journey of forty-three miles, a distance accomplished in four hours, solely for the purpose of viewing the picturesque country through which the railroad finds its way; and all along the route from Palermo our busy minds made countless "snapshots" of the grand, unnatural, almost unearthly, scenery through which we passed, taking mental photographs, which memory develops with wonderful distinctness when we recall our Sicilian journeyings.

At the station of Corleone our attention was challenged by a sky-blue omnibus. Nothing of all its component parts or its furnishing was new but a body-coat of blue paint, which contrasted, oddly enough, with the clay-incrusted running-gear of the vehicle. The mud of years clung to its wheels, and it seemed as if the dust of ages had collected in the ragged, faded "inside." It was driven by a living scarecrow, and drawn by two horses, the toughness of whose hides was demonstrated by the fact that their bones had not yet penetrated the parched and crackling integument in which they were enveloped. Fortunately for the poor beasts, nobody took passage within the coat of blue paint; and when we set out from the station we left the equipage where, later in the day, we found it, still awaiting the arrival

**SICILIAN (GREEK TYPE)**



of passengers who delayed to come or never came at all.

In the square in front of Il Duomo were three post-wagons, as old as the specimen we had seen at the station, one in red and orange, with one blue and three yellow wheels, and an old vettura, a grandiose vehicle, in blue, black, and yellow. The form of the latter was familiar to us. We had seen prints of its kind that were in vogue in the middle of the last century. Its windows were large enough to permit the aiming of a blunderbuss through them; its doors so narrow that the average man must needs enter sideways; the seats were but six inches in width, its interior but four feet square, very suggestive of agonizing posturing by inmates, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd," in a vehicle built to resist the shocks consequent upon travelling over rough and rocky roads, and evidently intended to afford a defence for its armed occupants from the attacks of brigands. In such conveyances did the Sicilian nobility make their journeys in the days of Fra Diavolo of fearful memory.

Opposite the cathedral was the only locanda in Corleone. We lunched there—on a balcony overlooking a piazza; we would not have sat down within the precincts of the place for a deed of gift of all it contained. We had brought our provisions with us, and, fortunately, were obliged to make use of nothing belonging to the albergo but the balcony and a corkscrew. The odors that hung about the building seemed to be almost visible and tangible. They so saturated, pervaded the rooms and halls that one was inclined to doubt if it would be possible to close the window-shutters without risking an explosion of ac-

cumulated fumes. In the room through which we stepped to the balcony was a bed—fit only for the flames—two broken chairs, a table, a cracked looking-glass, that reflected such distorted, puffy images of our faces that for a moment we fancied we had already fallen victims to the fearful contagion that infected the locanda. We noticed two colored lithographs hanging on the walls, and conquered disgust at the environment long enough to pause and read the inscriptions, from which we learned that, after “the submission of America” Cortez had condemned a certain cacique to death. In one of the prints the two daughters of the cacique were represented as arrayed in the garb of “belles sauvages,” kneeling before Cortez to intercede for their luckless father. Cortez, in satin robes, with the crown of America on his brow, grants the prayer of the maidens. The other print represented Cortez, the two beautiful savages, and their rescued father banqueting under a palm-tree, served by negroes in Turkish turbans, while Love and Glory, hovering above, awarded a wreath of victory to the magnanimous Spaniard. Thus, in another form, we beheld examples of the handiwork of the artists who decorate the carts at Palermo; and the lithographs testified to the universal craving of Sicilians for illustrations of mythological or heroic subjects.

In the centre of the square in front of the locanda is an octagonal fountain, to which crowds of women came to fill their cruses and amphoræ with water, but there was never a Rebecca or “Cruche Cassée” among them all. All were worn and anxious-looking; the young girls appeared like middle-aged women,

and the middle-aged women like ancient hags, witches, and ghostly crones.

While we partook of our repast, as we sat on the balcony, we were the cynosures of an observant crowd that had gathered in the square in front of the locanda, an envious, hungry company that begrudged us every bite. To the half-starved people the sight of us eating our lunch was beyond expression interesting. Poor souls! The thought that anybody had enough to eat must have been tantalizing to them, for in Corleone the spectacle of man, woman, or child who goes not hungry to bed every night is a vision of paradise.

The exhibition of misery, of public woe, took away our appetites. We could not eat in the presence of a starving multitude; so, paying our reckoning, we hurriedly left the locanda and started on a tour of inspection of the town. Up one filthy street, down another, meeting poverty-stricken folk: pale, anæmic women, hollow-eyed men, ragged, weird children, who begged us for bread, croaking in hoarse accents like weary old people tired of the world. The streets were paved, it is true, but in that respect resembled the beds of mountain torrents. The dens in which the inhabitants of Corleone live are dark, damp, and desolate; but, be it noted particularly, they afforded evidence of a continued struggle on the part of their occupants for cleanliness. There was no wilful slovenliness visible; the people had evidently not resigned themselves to a condition of bestiality; they still fought against a hopeless state of dirt, and were not content with their existence in the midst of squalor and unmitigated misery. Although it was near noon,

and the air was wintry, there were fires in less than one-tenth of the houses, and little preparation, if any, for a mid-day meal. Where there was work to do it was being done, and we saw mere children—little boys busily pegging and sewing shoes in the stalls of the cobblers, and wee girls mending rags that were but fit for paper-mills. We saw but two shops of any pretension, although Corleone is a town of fourteen thousand inhabitants, and they were the establishments of gunsmiths, who work for the sportsmen from Palermo and elsewhere, who come to Corleone “to shoot the covers” in the valley and on the neighboring hill-sides. We looked in vain for butcher-stalls, and found but few baker-shops; but we did see several ill-omened signs of lottery-offices; our guide, pausing a moment, pointed first to one of the latter and then to a neighboring church, saying: “They make the soldi jump out of the pockets of people who have hungry children.”

If the dwellings are poor, and hardly deserve the name of houses, and still less can be thought of as homes, but little rent is paid for them. We asked a woman what she paid a year for her two rooms, each of them about ten by twelve feet on the ground floor of a two-story building. She paid forty lire (eight dollars). She had a board bed, two cheap chairs, a wooden box, two amphoræ, two pots, a cupboard, a brazier, a few mugs and plates, four knives, no forks, six spoons. The place was clean, the scanty bed-clothing not very dirty, and the rooms were as neatly kept as it was possible to make such quarters. The woman's face and hands were clean, her hair was combed, her gown patched, and actually some of the

patches themselves were mended and pieced. All this betokened that she did not by any means belong to the lowest class of Corleone society.

She, the wife, keeps house and sews, prepares the food, and, when she has babies, cares for them. Her husband can earn a lira and a half a day. He is a good workman, but he could not get work more than half the time. Her boy, the only child now at home, can earn fifty centesimi a day tending goats. Sometimes on a festa they can afford meat; they give forty centesimi—think of it, philanthropists!—each Sunday to the church. Wine was dear; it cost thirty centesimi a litre; it used to be fifteen, but the “dazio” had been increased. Her boy could read a little; he knew more than his father and his mother; he was fourteen; in two years he would have to go for a soldier. Yes, they were better off than many of their neighbors; they were fortunate in having had only two children, the son and a daughter. The latter was married, and lived in Chiusa, fourteen miles away. The daughter had a baby four years old, a little girl, called after its grandmother; its grandparents had not seen the child; they seldom heard from their daughter; she could not write. The last time they had news of her the baby was ill—they hoped the Virgin had made it well again. Babies were misfortunes to poor people, but when they come poor people love them as much as do I Signori.

We asked her if she had heard of America. Yes, the husband of her neighbor across the street had gone there, and this year two acquaintances had returned thence, but were going back. In America people had meat two or three times a week, and al-

ways pork ; and her friends had coffee even frequently. But they have great snows in America, and it was far, and she and her marito were no longer young. Her husband was good to her—once when she was very ill, when her boy was born, he had sent for a doctor.

Such are “the short and simple annals of the poor” of one family. There are hundreds of such families in Corleone; tens of thousands of them in Sicily. Are they the most wretched of Sicilians? Not if their state of poverty is contrasted with the indescribable, unutterable misery of hundreds of thousands of their less fortunate countrymen. One cannot contrast poverty with riches in speaking of the Sicilian masses; one can only differentiate the degrees of pauperism. Sicily is as poverty-stricken to-day as in the ancient days when Verres laid waste “the granary of the world,” and the traveller who beholds the heartrending woe of the inhabitants of an island that, in happier days, was “a garden of delight,” may well recall the words of Cicero—“O spectaculum miserum atque acerbum.” \*

) \* CICERO. *Verr.*, Lib. V., Sec. 38.

## XXI

### JOURNEY TO SEGESTA

**An Early Start—Starlight—Sunrise—Birthplace of Laïs—Cyclops, Giants, and Chimeras Dire—Acres of Wild Flowers—Ancient Rivers—Saracen Strongholds—Calatafimi—Hosts of Beggars.**

JANUARY 28th we were astir before daylight, for we were to take a train that started at five o'clock. We had provided ourselves with a well-filled lunch-basket, for we were in doubt as to the quality of the restaurants we were likely to find on our journey, if, indeed, any restaurants there were between Palermo and our destination. We took with us all our wraps and rugs, for later there was to be a ride of sixteen miles through a wind-swept, mountainous country, in the midst of which stands the object of our pilgrimage, the Temple of Segesta.

Out from the station of Palermo-Lolli the train, promptly on time, makes its way under the stars, across Il Conco d' Oro, past many villas, through orange groves, onward to the northwest, with Monti Cuccio and Billiemi towering on the left, Monte Pellegrino and Capo di Gallo standing between the sea and the sleeping valley. At "Unshoe a Horse" (Sferro-Cavallo), so called in consideration of the roughness of its main street, a fishing-village eleven

miles from Palermo, the train skirts the sea-shore, and we behold a fairy picture of dancing, flitting lights down by the water's edge where fishermen were launching their boats, eager to begin their morning labors on the fishing-banks. The train bends to the west, burrows beneath a cliff standing up from the sea, emerges and runs along at the foot of a mighty precipice which, in the starlight, resembles the walls of stupendous fortifications. The engine shrieks, startling the echoes accustomed to mellow Sicilian music, and we stop a moment at Isola delle Femine (not the "Isle of Women," but the Island of Euphemius), a few hundred yards from shore, capped by a Norman tower, in which, long ago, was executed Cottizona, the sorcerer, who, with all his magic, was unable to persuade his judges that he was in verity Don Sebastian of Portugal.

We skirt a fertile plain, after we pass Capaci, at the foot of Monte Zacate, and the graying dawn reveals the town of Carini, a picturesque village, with the well-preserved walls of a feudal castle looking down upon it from an overhanging rock. This town owes a certain shady celebrity to the fact that in 415 B.C., Nicias, the Athenian ally of Segesta, captured and plundered it, and finding Laïs, a girl of seven, even then bewitching fair to look upon, carried her to Athens, where Apelles painted her as a nymph at a fountain, where Demosthenes wooed her with his oratory, Aristippus patronized her, and even Diogenes left his tub to greet her softly and speak her fair. Carini is also notorious as the birthplace of no less famous a personage than that prince of brigands, Fra Diavolo, of whom we have already discoursed at length.

SICILIAN MOUNTAINEER

UN/



Onward, from the inward curve of mountains at Carini, the railway bends seaward again, and then rounds the base of Monte Orso, three thousand feet in height. In the light of the coming sun, in a few minutes to rise above the heights of *Ætna*, far in the east, we pass through a vast orchard of olive-trees, planted—who knows when? The people call them “*saracinesca*,” and say that the trees are older than the Norman castle on the heights above; that, indeed, they were no longer young when King Roger landed in Sicily a few years after his kinsman, William the Conqueror, defeated Harold at Hastings. Be that as it may, the ancient olive-trees in the shadow of the mountain whose crest the risen sun has transfigured with a marvellous light are of remarkable age. Their gnarled, misshapen trunks, lurking in the night, assumed the forms and attitudes of cyclops, giants, chimeras, in act to speak, tossing their arms, writhing in agony like the weird, unearthly shapes that accosted Dante in the twilight of the under-world. What fearful forms, what portentous spectres were to be guessed in the dimness of departing night! what superstitions might chill the heart and torment the mind of the lonely wanderer in such a scene! for, lashed by winter gales, would not all that convocation of unearthly, monstrous shapes moan and growl and hiss, as the wild blasts tortured them into more fearful attitudes? On the edge of the land overhanging the sea there were tree-like phantasmagoria, swaying, bending, tottering, threatening to dash themselves down below into the sea, to the rocks, anywhere, to escape from their doom, the arrows of the coming day. All this was partly seen, in part imagined, as the

train sped along, winding its way in and out among the old olive-trees, planted ages ago, when the Saracens held all this sunny land and the Normans still haunted the forests of the wintry North.

And now the sun peeps over the eastern hills and glorifies the mountains beyond the Bay of Castellamare, a wide expanse of sparkling water, as great in extent as the Bay of Palermo, margined by a sickle of white sand, as fair and brilliantly limned as the new moon. All around the borders of the bay orange groves and pleasant fields spread far and wide between the sea and sand-dunes, rising in gentle undulations to hills that, sweeping upward in noble outlines, grow to mountains, walling in this charming domain from the unguessed world beyond.

The train has passed Partinico, a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, renowned for its trade in oil and wine, and soon reaches Balestrate, whence it skirts the shore of Castellamare, keeping close to the beach and sand-dunes, the latter overgrown with gorse and heaths, curious reeds and rushes, and cane with feathery plumes. Acre upon acre of purple flowers growing close to the ground beautify a wild and barren reach of coast, with only here and there a patch of soil economized from the general waste and tilled by contadini, who live in the wattled huts erected in the midst of the plantations. Strange reminiscences of the past are these same tabernacles; for in such, doubtless, the Sicans and the Siculi dwelt, in prehistoric times, when they made their dwellings and their fishing-boats of plaited cane covered with skins of goats, as the ancient Britons covered their willow basket-work with skins of wilder beasts.

Up from Castellamare station, three miles from the town of that name, the railway winds along the back of Il Fiume Freddo, the ancient Simoïs, a turbulent stream, which, when swollen by winter rains, spreads devastation far and wide along its course through the narrow valley, down which it careers to meet Il Fiume Gaggera, the ancient Scamander. The confluence of these two streams forms the San Bartolommeo (called by the Greeks Krimisos), which flows into the Tyrrhenian Sea at the foot of Monte Inice, near Castellamare del Golfo. On the banks of the Krimisos, Timoleon made a fearful slaughter of the Carthaginians, B.C. 342.

Confronting Monte Bonifato to the southwest, across the valley of Il Fiume Freddo, stands a range of hills, and just beyond its crest Calatafimi sits at an elevation of eleven hundred feet above the sea. This hill city takes its name from the old Saracen castle, Cal-at-Eufimi, but it is better known from the fact that it gave its modern name to the battle-ground where Garibaldi fought his first fight for Sicilian liberty in 1861.

To Calatafimi we were bound, and from the railroad station we beheld our route mapped out on the green hill-side, coiling upward from the bottom to the bleak, wind-swept summit. We found awaiting our arrival a vettura, a landau with three horses harnessed abreast. Worn and travel-stained was the ancient equipage, and faded and torn the very old-fashioned livery of its driver; but when we had taken our seats in it the three horses whirled it lightly along the road, responding gallantly to the snapping of whip and the shrill, raven-like cry, "Ah-ee! Avanti!" of their master, who drove, as did the son of Nimshi, furiously, as do all

Sicilian drivers of to-day, as if the veritable Fra Diavolo himself were in full cry in pursuit. An hour of climbing, of relentless and apparently needless urging of willing horses that tugged viciously at the traces, straining them almost to the breaking-point, and we arrived at the crest of the hill, and just below it, on its further, its southwestern, slope, beheld Calatafimi, a city of ten thousand people. Down a short stretch of badly paved highway we plunged, the old vettura rattling like a hundred pairs of castanets, bumping, thumping, swinging, and swaying from side to side, and entered a narrow and untidy street, through which we careered, reckless of the consternation, not to say terror, we occasioned to children, pigs, fowls, and mangy cur-dogs, that fled screaming, squealing, cackling, and yelping promiscuously into dirty houses or down filthy side-streets, or still filthier alleys, pell-mell, in mad struggle to escape from our onward charge. Suddenly the vettura drew up in front of an albergo, at sight of which we instantly congratulated ourselves that we were not dependent upon its hospitality for entertainment. Indeed, the squalor of the town, the filth accumulated in the streets, the sickening odors which polluted even the mountain air, the poverty-stricken appearance of the inhabitants, the loathsome aspect of hosts of beggars who crowded around our conveyance, mumbling, whining, some boldly demanding alms, grimacing idiotically, gesticulating wildly, as they exhibited grewsome scars or hideous deformities. All these sights and sounds made us impatient to continue our journey with as little delay as possible. On taking our departure from the albergo we were compelled to go on foot, owing to the steepness and rough-

ness of the streets, to a gate of the city at the opposite side of the town from that by which we had entered. It is needless to say that we were followed by a crowd of beggars, who limped and hobbled after us, plucked at our garments, ran before us, and stood in our way, crying "Muore di fame, signori! Muore di fame, signori!" (Dying of hunger, your worships! Dying of hunger, your worships!) We hurried on, utterly disconcerted by the awful spectacle, dropping half a handful of soldi in hopes of delaying the mob, that seemed ready, in the recklessness of despair, to lay hands on us, and we dared not look behind to see the mad scramble for the coppers.

## XXII

### SEGESTA

A Distant View of a Doric Temple—The Valley of the Gaggera—"The Rolling Scamander"—Fording the Torrent—"A Wild and Lonely Land"—Ancient Segesta—Its Glorious Temple—A Greek Theatre—Wonderful Landscapes.

AT the western gate of Calatafimi we sprang into our vettura, shouted to our driver "Avanti!" and urged him, who needed no urging, to rapid flight from the hideous precincts of the town and its hordes of beggars.

As we drove away from the city gate we beheld perched on a lofty pinnacle of rock the Castle of Calatafimi, hanging fearfully over the valley, looking down which we caught a distant view of hills on hills, rising in gray and purple masses from the depths of the valley down which our road led along the right bank of the Gaggera, flowing a thousand feet below. Two miles or more ahead of us a rocky pyramid juts boldly out from the western mountain, with which it is connected by a neck of rock, and on this isthmus stands a Doric temple superb in its isolation, desolate, deserted, silent. In color the edifice is golden brown, and at this distance, as the mellow, winter sunlight falls upon it, the Temple of Segesta, possibly the most perfectly preserved relic of Greek architecture in Sici-

ly, reminds one of a daintily carved reliquary of ruddy gold placed on a great altar overlaid with cloth of green. Cradled among the hills, lapped round by upland meadows, where the turf grows velvet-soft, the ancient sanctuary sits in magnificence, guarded and watched over by silver-gray and purple mountains, uplifting their domes and spires to the blue vault of heaven that bends over the consecrated spot.

We found ourselves in a lonely land, a country bare of trees (as are all the wild valleys and mountain-sides of Sicily), scarcely a house to be seen, and little evidence of human life or activity. The road before us, twining and undulating along the mountain-side, finally lost itself among the great hills far ahead. Throughout all its length we could not discover other travellers than ourselves. The distant hills seemed to rise like the monstrous waves of a dead and immobile sea ; their woodless heights and summits presented a barren, dreary aspect that even sunlight failed to cheer. There was snow on the crests of the mountains ; the air was sharp and wintry ; the wind made a hollow moaning as it swept the naked fields and sere pasturages. By the side of the road blanched stalks of bitter aloes stood erect like spears and cacti (*fichi d' India*), incongruous growths, intruding their uncanny shapes amid thickets of leafless brier-bushes, sombre gorse, and *planta genesta*. The highway declined to the river-bottom, and finally led us to a level tract covered with pebbles and boulders left by a late-receding flood. Where a by-path led down to the bank of the Gaggera the vettura stopped, and we found an *asinajo* and his beast awaiting our coming. *Asinajo* did not seem particularly glad to see us, and when we

alighted our driver turned his vehicle about and drove off without as much as saying "A riverderci," and there were we alone in a desolate glen, miles from the nearest police station. The two carabinieri we had seen on their way back to Calatafimi had doubtless arrived there by this time. The air was biting cold, the sky had become overcast, the country looked savage and desolate, our sole companion had as yet spoken no word, we had breakfasted before sunrise, it was after mid-day and we had not lunched. What wonder that thoughts of brigands—Sicilian brigands—crossed our minds. And of all places we had visited during our rambles in Sicily most suggestive of brigands and "brigantaggio" was the valley of the ancient Scamander, "on whose banks" (according to our Murray) "the ferocious Agathocles slaughtered all the poorer citizens of Segesta." To us, nursing our suspicions and weakly foreboding all degrees and kinds of misadventures, our asinajo preferred the request: "Un pezzo di pane, signori."

We made haste to serve him, and in addition to the bread gave him a piece of cheese and both the legs of a cold fowl. What would we not have given him had he announced himself as a deputy of Fra Diavolo and insisted upon mistaking us for an English lord and lady or American millionaires? If asinajo found it in his heart to thank us, he prevented his good intention (for which we gave him credit) by gagging himself with a drumstick, and in an incredibly short time our gift of provisions had disappeared. Then, for the first time, he deigned to smile upon us as he suggested starting immediately upon our journey. Having assisted la signora to mount a gorgeously

**NORMAN AND SARACEN TYPES**



caparisoned asina, he drove the beast into the stream, where the careful animal, taking her own time, picking her way cautiously, judgmatically setting her feet on solid bottom, managed to struggle through the torrent, and finally to emerge on the farther bank. Meanwhile, the writer, accepting the invitation of the youth, who was several inches shorter and perhaps forty pounds lighter than himself, mounted upon the back of the Sicilian, where he clamped himself pick-a-back, fully determined that he should not be gotten rid of so long as the asinajo kept his feet and chose to play the rôle of Sindbad to an Americano "Old Man of the Sea." The current nearly swept the youth from his slippery footing on the smooth, round stones which composed the bed of the stream. The eddying, swirling sweep of water made the tourist giddy; he closed his eyes, tightened his grip, expecting every moment to find himself plunged beneath the "rolling floods of Scamander."

At length the asinajo, a mere boy, staggered up the farther bank and set the full-grown man on solid ground; then, turning to survey his late burden from head to foot, as if to measure its proportions and estimate its solid contents, the panting youth ejaculated, in a tone of self-congratulation, "Per Bacco!" and crossed himself. Not another word, good or bad, did he vouchsafe; nevertheless, he seemed to regard the incident good-naturedly and entirely in the light of business. We proceeded on our journey, the lady riding the asina led by the asinajo, the writer following humbly behind with what speed he could, over as muddy and slippery a bit of road as it has ever been his fate to travel on foot. Up the steep ascent we

climbed for half an hour, rounding the northern face of Monte Barbaro ; then, crossing the shoulder of the mountain, came to the house of the custode, from the door-steps of which we obtained a view of the Temple of Segesta we are not likely soon to forget.

In plan and elevation, in detail, in decoration, the edifice is a perfect specimen of the Doric school, and of that school at its best. Its austere simplicity, its massive construction, the grand effects of faultless perspective, all inspire the imagination with a sense of true beauty and appeal to the intellect as demonstrations of supreme art. All the world has seen Pæstum and admired the three ruins superbly rising on the solitary, naked plain, surrounded afar by blue mountains and within the sound of the breakers rolling upon the beach. It may be questioned whether the Temple of Neptune, of the three ruins of Pæstum the most beautiful, is purer Doric than the Temple of Segesta, or whether it is better preserved. The latter is placed in the midst of such a wonderful landscape, and is so charmingly related to its surroundings, that it creates in the mind an indescribable impression of grandeur and beauty. Guy de Maupassant expresses this idea when he says: "The Temple of Segesta appears to have been posed by a man of genius who had revealed to him the only site where it might be fittingly placed ; where it alone, in its solitude, animates the immensity of the landscape, giving life to the scene and rendering it divinely beautiful."

The peristyle of the Temple of Segesta is 191 feet 7 inches in length by 76 feet 5 inches in width ; it has thirty-six columns in all, six on each front and twelve on each side, not counting the four columns

at the corners, which belong both to the front and wings.\* The columns, resting on a platform of four steps, are unfluted, and at their base measure 6 feet 11 inches in diameter and are 35 feet in height. The capitals are in one piece, and the blocks of the architraves are of enormous size, spanning the width between the centres of the columns. That the columns are unfluted, and that there is no trace of a cella or of interior pavement, shows that the temple was never finished. The work on it was probably suspended when Segesta was taken by Agathocles (307 B.C.) and its inhabitants put to the sword.

As we sat looking at the superb ruin from the house of the custode we became conscious that it owed its charm and grandeur primarily to the perfect symmetry of its design—to the exact and effective co-ordination of all its parts each with each; in a word, to the harmonious relation of all its dimensions whether of general plan or of detail of construction. It seemed to us faultless, equally and proportionately massive in all its parts, so that the enormous size of its columns was not unduly emphasized; and, notwithstanding the age-defying solidity of the structure, we found it to possess grace, elegance, and apparent lightness, notwithstanding its Titanic strength and solidity.

When we resumed our walk we were followed by a dozen boys, who had congregated we knew not whence, for there was no house in sight, save the official residence of the custode, and he most emphatically disclaimed responsibility for any of the party; in-

\* CHIESL. *Sicilia*.

deed, he seemed to be as much troubled as were we by their company and their demands for alms, for "pezzi di pane," which were prefaced and followed by the wail "Muore di fame, signori! Muore di fame!" The incessant importunities of these youthful banditti, who mocked at the threats of the custode and laughed when he brandished his cudgel, robbed our visit to the temple of much of its anticipated pleasure. At length we opened our lunch-basket, and, reserving for ourselves certain of its contents, gave the remainder to our asinajo, authorizing him to divide the provisions with his chums, on the condition that he induce them to leave us in peace and quietness. They retired to the far side of the temple, and we secured a short respite from their onsets, but we could hear them wrangling like angry brigands quarrelling over their booty. They soon returned, however, to where we were seated, and we were obliged, finally, to rid ourselves of their company by leaving them in possession of the place and betaking ourselves to the theatre of Segesta.

From the front of the temple a narrow mule-trail leads downward to and across the meadows, then up again, curving around the south side of Monte Barbaro, and so mounts to the summit, a rocky platform a few acres in extent. The northeast angle of the face of the mountain has been hewed and hollowed to form the cavea (auditorium) of the ancient play-house. In form it is semicircular, its greatest diameter being two hundred and five feet; it is surrounded by a wide gallery, below which are twenty semicircular rows of seats divided into seven *cunei* by flights of steps leading down to the chorus. The *scena*, or stage

is ninety feet wide, and is in such a fair condition of preservation that one may study its construction and gain an adequate idea of the arrangement of the scenery and the mechanisms employed in the representations of Greek plays. While the theatre of Segesta is not as large as the theatre at Taormina or Syracuse, being about one-third the size of the former and but half the size of the latter, it is in some respects a more artistic and handsomer structure than either, and in the grandeur of its situation is surpassed only by the theatre at Taormina.

At the back of the scena, which of old was ornamented by a double row of columns, the face of Monte Barbaro drops in sheer precipices, disclosing a magnificent panorama of mountains and highlands across the valley of the Gaggera, beyond which rise the superb pyramids of Monti Inice, Sparagio, and Del Romito. To the right of Monte Inice, and between it and Monte Bonifato, crowned with the Castle of Alcamo, the eye ranges over a long vista of fertile land, extending along the foot-hills, sinking gradually onward to the Gulf of Castellamare, as far as to Montaniello, thirty miles distant in the northeast. Down the valley of the Gaggera is to be seen the site of the celebrated Thermæ (hot-baths), near the town of Castellamare (Emporio Egestano), the ancient seaport of the metropolis Segesta.

We could have remained long seated in the old theatre that has been for ages silent and tenantless, but the day was drawing to a close, and it was a far cry to the station of Alcamo-Calatafimi. We accordingly set out on our return journey, taking a sheep-walk, which wound down and around the face of Mon-

te Barbaro, and in a few minutes came to the house of the custode. Stopping there but long enough to register our names, we bade the custodian "riverderla," and in the order in which we had made the ascent in the morning, so we descended to the banks of the Gaggera, forded the stream, and paid our asinajo, who loudly complained of our "tip," although it was more than double the sum he was entitled to receive. He accepted an extra allowance equal to the sum we had at first given him without a word or sign of thanks for this quadruple fee. Then, turning as if to depart, he halted, and returned again to ask us with undaunted assurance to give him "qualche cosa per mangiare," and, in spite of the fact that we had made over to him the larger part of our lunch, ventured the assertion, "Muore di fame, signori!" We found our vettura awaiting us, and, losing no time, we set off for the railway station. As we went around the town, and did not enter Calatafimi, we saw no more of its beggars and its poverty-stricken people.

## **XXIII**

### **SELINUS**

**The Quarrel of Selinus and Segesta—Salemi—Castelvetrano  
—The Ruined Temples of Selinus—A Scene of Desolation.**

FROM Alcamo-Calatafimi to Castelvetrano the railway runs over meadow-lands, and where the valley of the Crimissus expands into the plain of Salemi we beheld the vast extent of all that fruitful country (celebrated for its wheat) for the possession of which the citizens of Segesta and Selinus waged unceasing, ruthless war during the fifth century before Christ. It is hard to believe that it was the war between the two ancient cities for the possession of these Sicilian wheat-lands that involved Athens in a contest which, in the end, so greatly impaired her military and naval power that thereafter the Spartans, and not the Athenians, dominated the internal affairs and dictated the foreign policy of Greece.

Midway between Alcamo-Calatafimi and Castelvetrano we came to the station of Ninfa - Salemi. The latter, the ancient town of Halicyæ, contains to-day about ten thousand inhabitants, and is superbly placed on a picturesque height crowned by the crumbling remains of a Saracen castle. From here on, as we descended from the water-shed between the Tyrrhenian and the African seas, leaving the wheat-lands behind,

we travelled through a country of vineyards, orchards, and olive groves, crossed a wide plain of corn-fields and pastures, and came to Castelvetro, where we proposed stopping for the night.

Castellu Vetro, as its inhabitants call their city of twenty thousand people; sits upon a hill-side, overlooking a fair and fertile district of which the Dukes of Monteleone are hereditary proprietors. Their old palazzo, adjoining a church with a curious campanile, stands in the market-place of the town; but Castelvetro is a squalid, wretched abode of miserable people, and it is not to be wondered at that the dukes rarely visit their estates or lodge in the Aragona-Pignatelli Palazzo. At Castelvetro we lodged comfortably at the Hôtel Bixio, and at an early hour on the morning after our arrival we set out on our expedition to Selinunte.

It is seven miles and more from Castelvetro to the site of ancient Selinus; \* the road descends about five hundred feet in that distance, crossing a wide plain, which, as the traveller approaches the sea-shore, loses its varied charm of groves, vineyards, and highly cultivated grain-fields. We saw many cork-trees, the first we had seen in Sicily, and in the bottom, by the water-courses, we beheld the "selinous," or wild parsley, which gave its name to the city whose ruins we were now to behold.

We followed the Madiuni River, a stream that in winter-time only sends a sluggish current across flat lands to the Mediterranean. The scene becomes deso-

\* Some classical dictionaries erroneously state that Castelvetro occupies the site of ancient Selinus.

TEMPLE OF SEQUESTA



late. As you approach the sea you hear the muffled beating of the surf upon the sand, the wind sighs among the sedges and reeds, and sea-gulls fly screaming overhead. The soil is unfruitful; gorse, cacti, mimosæ, and aloes stand stark and bare, wind-swept. The "chippolazzo," a noxious bulb, sends up faded and sickly blossoms resembling blighted hyacinths; "porre" erects its spikes of ill-formed flowerets—plants that we were warned not to handle, for both are said to be poisonous to the touch. The curse of solitude and desolation is on the land; myriads of snails infest the herbage, clinging to stunted palmettos, and there are gruesome plague-spots on all the vegetation. Wormwood, which our guide called "herba bianca," a pale, uncanny-looking plant, grows everywhere, and tawdry pestilential weeds usurp the choicest morsels of ditch and ragged highway.

A fit setting, all this, for the picture of ruin that now comes in view.

One hundred feet above the "African Sea," on a table-land that sinks gradually to the west, to Il Gorgo di Cotone—now a marshy valley said to have been drained by Empedocles to rid it of infection in the days when a multitude of men lived along its borders—upon a barren, wind-swept waste, there lie in vast confusion the broken columns, overthrown walls, and entablatures of three Doric temples. As one approaches them the magnitude of the ruins does not at first impress the beholder, but upon closer inspection the colossal proportions of the stones of which they are composed, and the bulk and weight of the prostrate columns, are better appreciated, and one realizes their grandeur, their stupendous purport. The

thought rushes into the mind : if the ancient builders were not in very truth a race of giants, they built like Titans, playing with mechanical forces, lost arts to the men of the present time.

The largest of the three temples, supposed to have been dedicated to Apollo, was built about the beginning of the fifth century B.C. It was never completed, its columns were left unfluted, and its internal embellishment was probably not begun. It measured 371 feet in length, 177 in width, including the steps and stylobate on which it is mounted. That is to say, it had a frontage equal to that of the Madison Square Garden, and a depth equal to the frontage of fifteen ordinary New York City houses. On this parallelogram there were set up, in the peristyle, forty-six huge columns, each  $57\frac{1}{2}$  feet in height (including the capitals) and  $11\frac{1}{4}$  feet in diameter at the base. These columns are each composed of five drums tapering successively from the base of the columns upward from  $11\frac{1}{4}$  to 7 feet 11 inches at the neck, and each drum is more than ten feet in height. One of our party, the tallest man, placed himself by one of them, and although he stood on tip-toes and with upstretched arms, his fingers did not reach within two feet of the top of the monstrous stone ; it would take five men with extended arms to encompass the wonderful girth of the chiselled block. The ruins of this temple are more confused than are those of the other two. The irregular, chaotic pile of blocks and drums rises like a broken and disordered mountain-crest, upheaved from grass-grown earth, or like a mighty reef upborne above the smooth sea. One can appreciate the purport of this huge confusion only by calling upon the

imagination to picture the incalculable force of the earthquake that wrecked in one instant of time a colossal edifice intended by its builders to last as long as the world itself should endure.

“But mighty Jove cuts short, with great disdain,  
The long, long views of poor designing man.”

What mind can adequately conceive the idea that this temple of the Sun-God fell into shapelessness like a mole-hill crushed beneath the heel of a ploughman? And all these years the ruins of its monstrous fabric have lain where they were lightly tossed. Nations have come and gone—Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Saracen, Norman, Spaniard. The god in whose honor the temple was built is dead; but there, in the midst of all the wreck, are vast round blocks of stone, some of them unblemished by weather and untouched of time, bearing silent witness to the wonder-working skill, the deathless genius of a race of men whose story shall be as familiar as household words to races yet unborn, long after the very dust into which the Temple of Apollo is crumbling shall have been wafted far and wide across the Sicilian plain.

About fifty yards to the south of the Temple of Apollo (which was surpassed in size only by the Temple of Diana at Ephesus and that of the Olympian Jupiter at Agrigentum) there are the ruins of a temple dedicated to which one of the old divinities is not surely known. This second structure was of much smaller dimensions than the edifice above described—viz., 202 feet 6 inches in length, 79 feet 8 inches in breadth, and had twenty-two columns 30 feet 4 inches in height, and 6 feet 3 inches in diameter at the base.

When the earthquake overturned the columns of this temple, many of them fell outward from their bases, and the frustra of some of them lie in the same relative position they occupied when standing. This capricious action of the seismic wave scattered the disjointed members of the temple more widely over the surface of the plain; but, strange to say, the platform on which the structure stood, wherever it can be seen amid the chaos of superimposed blocks and drums, does not appear to have been rent or disrupted by the upheaval of the ground. This fact is only to be accounted for by imagining that there was no undulatory motion of the earth at this point, but that the temple was thrown down by a lateral, horizontal motion, produced at right angles to the side walls of the building. A sudden movement of the land from north to south tipped the columns in the north wall to the north; a following recovery and swing from south to north, which, acting in unison with the thrust of falling superstructures, felled the columns in the south wall so that they lay with their capitals towards the south. No pretence is made of actually describing the action of the earthquake; but the appearance of the ruins as they lie upon the ground suggests this explanation of the exhibition of the forces that threw the different parts of the structure into the positions they now relatively occupy.\*

\* While we are inclined to admit the reasonableness of the "earthquake theory" of the overthrowing of the temples of Selinus, we hold that it is more than probable that the vast destruction was wrought by the Carthaginians, who attempted to utterly destroy the frontier city of the Siceliots. This they did by turning their engines of war and other mechanical devices against the citadels and temples of the doomed city.

To the south again, fifty yards away, are the ruins of a third temple, 223 feet 3 inches in length, 83 feet 7 inches in breadth, the columns of which rose to the height of 33 feet 6 inches, and are 7 feet 5 inches in diameter at their base. At the southeast angle of the front of this temple three columns, or portions of them, are still standing, but on the north side of the building all the drums and blocks lie in regular order, extending outward from the steps of the stylobate, as if arranged for the reconstruction of the building. The columns, capitals, and entablatures of this edifice were more ornate, more richly decorated, than the members of either of the other two temples. The columns are fluted, the capitals exhibit an owl's-beak moulding, and in 1831 some very beautiful metopes, carved in a mediocre style of Greek art, which were used to adorn the entablature, were discovered and taken to the Museum of Palermo, where we curiously examined them.

The view eastward from the three temples (they all face the rising sun) is very picturesque. Beyond the desolation of the plain, miles and miles away, a great bay makes into the land, and on the farther side of the blue water bluer hills rise against the sky, soaring higher and higher to the mountains of central Sicily.

Three-quarters of a mile to the west of the three temples the ruins of the acropolis and city of Selinus stand beyond Il Gorgo di Cotone. Across the un-

**A very careful study of the condition of the ruins supplies almost incontrovertible proof that the latter theory is as reasonable and as susceptible of proof as the assumption that Selinus was destroyed by a convulsion of nature.**

wholesome quagmire we took our way over a bridge spanning a small creek which discharges a pinched and shallow stream during the rainy season into the African Sea. From the bridge a cart-track leads up to the foot of a crumbling wall, the ramparts of the ancient town, passing around one end of which we come to the platform where, ages ago, the city gate opened towards the harbor, which is now choked and filled with sand and mud. We passed within the limits of Selinus and walked upon a pavement over which Grecian and Carthaginian chariot wheels once rolled, and again stood in the midst of a group of ruins, the remains of four temples which were erected within the boundaries of the city itself.

The level top of the hill upon which these temples were built was formerly surrounded by walls, and this part of the town, the acropolis, was traversed by two main streets running north and south. From these avenues others extended at right angles; but little is to be seen of streets or houses save the two principal thoroughfares and certain ruined pavements which were excavated during the present century. The four temples face the east, as do the three already described. That one nearest to the sea, but fifty yards from the bluffs which rise boldly from a beach of sand, is 139 feet in length and 60 feet in breadth. Its ruins, which lie in a confused heap, have been partly cleared of the sand which had drifted into the cella and weeded of the grass and palmettos by which they were hidden from sight for many centuries.

Across a street which runs east and west there are the remains of a small temple, differing broadly in style from any of the others. It had Ionic columns

TEMPLES OF MINERVA AND APOLLO. SELINUS



and Doric entablatures, and was of diminutive size, only  $28\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 15 feet. Its total height was but  $14\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and the dainty columns measured but  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet at the base, tapering to 1 foot in diameter. A mere plaything compared with the Temple of Apollo, the mighty structure thirteen and one-half times its size. One of the columns of the latter had a diameter equal to the width of the miniature edifice, which, however, made up for what it wanted in size and grandeur by the exquisite decorations with which it was adorned.

A few yards to the north, again, are the ruins of a third temple, which, like all the rest, except the one last mentioned, is in the pure Doric style. It is supposed to have been dedicated to Hercules, and is remarkable for the evidence it presents that the Greeks painted the exteriors of their temples in strongly contrasting colors. Some of the columns and part of the entablature still show patches of blue, red, and black pigments laid on a shell of plaster or stucco, with which this temple, and doubtless some of the others, were originally finished.

Beyond these temples to the north and inland extended the city and citadel, and from the vast cumuli, the mounds and barrows, it can readily be learned that in the days of its glory Selinus was a city fortress that could be taken only by an overwhelming force. Such a force, an army of one hundred thousand men, did Hannibal Giskon bring against Selinus in the year 409 B.C., and the proud city—its acropolis, its temples, its harbors, and the abodes of its multitudes of citizens—was given over to the destroyer. The magnificent city became “the abiding-place of dragons, a habita-

tion for owls." The gods deserted its shrines. Its walls and battlements crumbled throughout the centuries, and all the land, once the scene of marvellous enterprise and high endeavor, was delivered over to "Silence and slow Time."

## XXIV\*

### A MYSTERIOUS EXCURSION

**"Sleepless Activities"—Trapani at Dawn—An Uncanny Guide—Monte San Giuliano—The Field of Hercules—"Gobbo Brings us Luck"—"A Guide-book in Breeches."**

AT the time of our first visit, there were two hotels in Trapani; having put up at one of them, we wished we had gone to the other, and many times recalled Dr. Johnson's pronunciamento, "No man who hath contrivance enough to get himself into a jail will go to sea in a ship"—substituting for the last six words, in bitterness of spirit and sleepless exasperation, "spend the night in a Trapani hotel." As for the landlord of the hotel in which we found ourselves, we wished him no worse luck than that, having made his own beds, he might be compelled to lie in them. We have since learned that there is to-day in Trapani a hotel where one may lodge in comfort and find meat and drink of a good quality. "Time and the hour runs through the roughest day," or night, and with daybreak came deliverance from the filthy precincts of the evil-smelling tavern, whose hapless guests were not so sure of feeding as of being fed upon.

\* Chapters XXIV. and XXV. were written later than those which precede and follow them—in April, when we returned to Sicily on a second visit, and especially to make the ascent of Monte San Giuliano.

At the first gray of dawn, on a fine morning, we found our way stumblingly, yawning and blinking, down a creaking, winding stairway to the door of the albergo, where a drowsy publican sat at the receipt of custom. To him we paid our reckoning, and, without so much as asking for a cup of coffee, fled from sight of him and his environment, as glad to be gone as were Bunyan's pilgrims what time they escaped from Doubting Castle. At the corner of the next street we found awaiting our appearance a landau with three horses harnessed abreast like the coursers of a Grecian chariot. Entering the vehicle, we were driven away from the scene of our trials and tribulations; but presently our vetturino drew up his horses at a baker's shop, where, for forty centesimi, we bought two new-made loaves of sweet white bread. From a fruit-stand across the way we selected half a dozen oranges, with ruddy blushes on their cheeks, as rare and ripe and luscious as the Sicilian sun and soil can produce. What more did we want? We were alive, and it was a luxury to live on such a morning; the air was tonic enough had our appetites needed whetting.

With pistol-like cracking of whip, which set our three horses a-prancing like the steeds of Diomede, our cocchiere "gave himself to the road." Merrily on we rattled out of town towards the east beyond the limits of the city, to the foot of Monte San Giuliano, where our road began its upward climb of seven miles.

Near an ancient church we were aware of a very diminutive dwarf, who stood by the wayside holding up a warning hand, as if to stay our farther progress. He was misshapen, uncouth, as twisted as one of the

gnarled and knotted olive-trees that grew near the spot where he had taken his stand to challenge us. He evidently knew of our coming. Our driver heeded his signal to halt ; indeed, the three horses seemed instinctively to obey the peremptory gesture of the prodigy. His dwarfship nodded good-naturedly, reassuringly to us, who regarded him curiously and not without reverence, due to his sudden and surprising apparition. He advanced in silence to the side of the vettura, and, without receiving a word of invitation, or waiting for it, drew himself up, baboon-like, by the mere strength of his long, uncanny arms to the box-seat, whence he grinned pleasantly over his shoulder at us, and in a tone of command ordered the driver to give the whip to his horses. In such fashion we began our journey up the ancient mountain, under the care and guidance of as queer and mysterious a creature as ever slaved for an enchanter or cracked jokes for a king in the good old days when dwarfs and other merry men found their way to courts to grace festivals or dandle cap and bells. Our Sicilian guide presently, standing up in the carriage, reached out his hand and laid it gently and with marked respect upon the humped back of the amiable monster ; then, seating himself again, said in an impressive whisper, "Gobbo, he brings us luck."

If the reader will have patience while it is explained to him under what circumstances the Americano witnessed the performance of the mystic ceremony above described, he may be able to appreciate why this most excellent fooling produced a somewhat weird, but withal a pleasantly superstitious, impression upon the imagination of even so sceptical a modern as a travel-

ler from the New World. We had set out from a city which Virgil would have us believe was founded by Æneas and his Trojans, where, as Dante tells us, old Anchises "finio la lunga etade," died, and was buried; where, on his return from Carthage, leaving Dido all forlorn and forsaken, pious Æneas celebrated games in honor of his father's ghost, and whence he made a pilgrimage to the shrine of his mother, Venus, on the summit of the mountain named after Eryx, son of Butes, the mighty wrestler, whom Hercules overcame what time that son of Jupiter drove the stolen herds of Geryon lowing along the far Sicilian shore. In the city of Eryx, at the top of Monte San Giuliano, as the mountain Eryx is called to-day, we had been told, and did verily believe, that we should find a shrine of Venus-Erycina on the former site of a temple of Astarte—Astarte, to whom King Solomon's friend, Hiram of Tyre, and his country-woman Dido, Queen of Carthage, offered sacrifices on altars whose very stones have ages long gone crumbled into dust. From the place where we encountered our unbidden fellow-passenger we could see the island, the goal in the boat-races given in honor of the manes of Anchises, and it did not shock our belief in the truth of Virgil's story to learn that the sailors and harbor-men of to-day know the rock only by its modern name, "asinello"—*id est*, "the ass." On the mountain-side before us were ruins, said to be of temples, where altars had smoked with sacrifices to Baal, where pious Carthaginians had caused their children to pass through the fire, and where Moloch and Melkarte had been worshipped with bloody rites. This we could believe, for in the blue distance beyond the foot-hills of Eryx

we beheld the mountain where dwelt Phalaris, for whom Perillus made the brazen bull which annually devoured its hecatombs of human victims. All this we knew or guessed, and how much was not left to the imagination concerning the mysterious city we had set out to visit?

What wonder, then, if it seemed to us entirely appropriate and in the natural order of the day's events, to be met upon the threshold of our adventure by a messenger from the powers beyond, sent to lead us to the mysteries we might seek in vain alone and unattended. Moreover, Gobbo added to the romance and picturesque detail of the pilgrimage. It was charmingly fantastic to let the imagination play around him, especially in such a place. On the highway to the shrine of Venus the sight of him suggested humorous fancies of Bottom and Titania, Beauty and the Beast. He seemed to us to be a familiar spirit whom we had often met before, in dreamland belike, of whom we had read many times and oft in the dear old but ever-new stories of "Once upon a time."

The boldly surveyed, firmly laid highway of Monte San Giuliano crawls upward in many curves and circumbendibuses. Forty times or more does this trail of a serpent upon the rock of Eryx double back upon itself, now crawling around the faces of cliffs, gliding along the tops of crag and precipice, now hiding itself in the shadows of gorge and cañon, whence it emerges again to encircle jutting masses of rock that stand boldly out from the mountain-side. So favorable are all the gradients, so well calculated all the curves of this masterpiece of road-building, that the ascent may be made in comfort and expeditiously, horses being

able to proceed for the greater part of the distance, seven miles, at a jog-trot.

A mile from the foot of the mountain we overtook a pedestrian, whose polite salute and cheery "Buon giorno" prompted us to offer him a seat in our vettura. He accepted our invitation, explaining that he had missed the "posta" which leaves Trapani every day before daylight. Our companion proved to be Signor Guerreri, "Ispettore Domaniali," that is to say, the Inspector of Government Domain, who was on his way to his official residence in the city we proposed to visit and explore. He was able, by reason of much study of books and documents and from personal observation, to give us unlimited information concerning the ancient, mediæval, and modern history of Eryx and its inhabitants, information which is not to be readily acquired by ordinary travellers. We congratulated ourselves upon being able to exchange compliments with such a distinguished guest, who, if not indeed a priest of Astarte nor the Guardian of the Temple of Venus, was no less a personage than the Warden of the Marches of Mount Eryx. Gobbo had brought us luck! We proceeded merrily, and with much pomp and circumstance, upward on our journey, enjoying a grand view of the plain of Hercules, which, as we ascended higher and higher up the mountain-side, seemed to unroll and spread out beneath us like a great map. We looked over a land of vineyards, of orange, lemon, and olive groves, of meadows and wheat-fields, varied by golden-brown plantations where the soil was newly ploughed.

The base of the mountain was margined by rich fields of crimson "peperone" and trefolia in full

bloom, and golden senape mixed with scarlet poppies. Upon the mountain-side grew masses of *planta genesta*, with its yellow blossoms, such as the *Plantagenets* of England wore so proudly in their bonnets, and gorse, the dark hue of which accented the tender green of sumach, *artemisia*, wild asparagus, belladonna, and *camamilla*. There were ferns in endless variety, "*fiore di mattina*," our own morning-glories, still asleep, and cyclamen. A world, a sea, of flowers of brightest colors.

From time to time we exchanged greetings with herdsmen and goatherds seated by the road-side breaking their long fast, making their first meal on coarse, dry bread. In hooded cloaks they looked more like Berber or Moorish mountaineers than men of European blood; and all of them carried pottery flagons or crocks of classic shape in which to mix their wine and water, and wore sandals of hide or goatskin of the same shape and fashion shown in ancient Greek or Roman sculptures.

At the foot of the mountain we had seen figs as large as ripe plums upon the trees; at a height of one thousand feet above the plain the trees were but putting forth their leaves. The air had grown colder, fewer flowers were blooming, and we lost sight of many varieties that love the warmer sunlight of the plains. The upper range and cliffs of Eryx are draped with heather, amid which roam flocks of sheep, watched by shepherds carrying long pastoral crooks, clad in sheepskin coats and trousers, picturesque and picture-inspiring subjects for artists in search of classic models. Such figures were to be seen in the old, old times, when Acestes, guarding his flocks in Eryx, saw with

wonder the return of the Trojans' ships from the Libyan shores. For although the times have changed, the races of men that inhabit Eryx have not changed with them, at least not in dress and manner of life, if indeed in mind or habit of thought.

Suddenly we experienced a rapid decline in temperature, and while we were huddling ourselves into our overcoats a sea-fog swept around the northwest face of the mountain and enveloped us in a dense white mantle. The magic of the change was most impressive, not to say awe-inspiring. But a moment before we were in the world and of it; then, in the twinkling of an eye, the far-ranging vision of mountains, plain, and sea was blotted out, and we seemed to be caught up to sublimer heights, to journey on through silent chaos, where all space, as at "the beginning," was void and without form. As suddenly as it overcame us the fog lifted and was wafted away, the sunlight shone again, and then again the fog. But ere it closed in upon us we made out, doubtingly, a picture of shining battlements, towers, and castle walls, all apparently upborne on clouds that concealed the peaks and pinnacles of Eryx. For one moment the pageant assumed definite and earthly shape; but even as we gazed at it the ærial citadel dissolved and disappeared like the passing of a glorious vision, and the mists, uplifted, revealed the earth, the sunny plain, the plantations, and the haunts of men.

As we approached the summit the steep slopes of the mountain-side rose to the base of crags and perpendicular escarpments resembling stupendous walls, founded upon and growing from the everlasting rock. Finding our way slowly through the fog, and skirting

**SILINUS. TEMPLE OF HERCULES (ACROPOLIS)**



these cyclopean ruins, we came to a turn in the road. The cocchiere cracked his whip, the jaded horses sprang forward in a final burst of speed, and, smiting sparks from the pavement, scrambled up a steep bit of road between two massive bastions. Gobbo turned, and, smiling upon us cheerily, shouted "Eccoci!" as we passed beneath the pointed arch of a giant gateway and entered the precincts of the most ancient city in Sicily.

Turning to the right, into a small square, an irregular piazza, on which were stables, a blacksmith's forge, and a half-ruined locanda (described in guide-books as the principal inn of the city of Monte San Giuliano), we halted; our steeds, panting after their mad gallop, reeking and steaming like creatures of the mist about to vanish, dissolved in clouds. A crowd of muffled and veiled figures, materializing out of the fog, gathered around our vettura, saluting "Il Ispettore" respectfully, but casting searching glances at his companions, "The Strangers," as if bidding them stand and unfold themselves. Gobbo clambered down from his seat on the box, opened the door of the landau, and, bowing profoundly, invited us to alight. Seeing which, the silent bystanders did us reverence, thereby, as we were fain to hope, expressing their approval of our presence, and according to us the freedom of their municipality.

In such state, so attended and thus welcomed, did we make "joyous entrance" into the ancient city on Mount Eryx, a city sacred to Venus!

## XXV

### A CITY IN CLOUD-LAND

**Three Gates of Eryx—Astarte, Aphrodite, Venus, Madonna—  
Cyclopean Masonry—"A Street in Bagdad"—The Castle of  
Eryx—Shrine of Venus-Erycina—Return to Earth.**

**THREE** great gateways pierce the walls of Eryx; that one by which we had entered is called "The Trapani Gate." "The Gate of the Heralds" is close to the "Mother Church"—Matrice—and, therefore, often spoken of as La Porta del Carmine. At "The Gate of the Sword" occurred the massacre of the French during the Sicilian Vespers, and many unholy legends of cruelty haunt the shadows of its grim tower and the glowering recesses of its most unchristian arches, which are characteristically Saracen in model and construction. It was not alone the commanding and isolated site of this acropolis, surrounded as it is by walls, moats, and natural precipices, that, in all ages, have rendered Eryx "inexpugnable." Its inhabitants trusted loyally to the protection of divinities that were fabled to have their abodes in the sacred precincts consecrated to them in the uppermost courts of the Citadel, where, since the morning of the world, have stood successively a temple of Astarte, of Aphrodite, of Venus-Erycina, and, in these later days, a shrine of the Holy Madonna. The beauty-loving

Greeks, finding in Astarte the prototype of one of their own goddesses, made a place for her in their new mythology, under the name of Aphrodite; her the Romans renamed Venus, the mother of their ancestor Æneas, and so greatly venerated in Mount Eryx was this loveliest of all pagan divinities that the early Christians could not find it in their hearts to banish the Goddess of Love to the limbo to which they ruthlessly consigned the less bewitching attendants of Jove's starry court. Therefore, as pagan priests had paid divine honor to Astarte, Aphrodite, Venus, so in time did Christian ministers bow themselves at the shrine consecrated to their ideal of womanly grace and loveliness, erecting on Mount Eryx an altar to the "Madonna of all the Graces." The priestesses of Astarte became in time Vestal Virgins, and these, after many centuries, were succeeded by a sisterhood of holy nuns.

Eager to begin at the very beginning of things historical, we followed our guide to the Gate of the Sword. A pointed archway proclaims its Saracenic or Norman origin. Beneath the impost of the arch are layers of confused and irregular masonry of unknown workmanship, probably of Roman construction. To the right of the gateway, constructed of cyclopean blocks, is a square bastion, the corner-stones of which, at least, were laid nearly thirty centuries ago. Who laid them there? What men installed them in the places where—protected from the sun and the rain by mounds of earth and superimposed masonry—they have lain buried out of sight until resurrected by nineteenth-century antiquity hunters? We seek in vain to know their history, and but tease imagination

in endeavoring to solve the mystery of their unwritten, unchiselled story.

From the Gate of the Sword we found our way to the Cathedral of Monte San Giuliano, recently restored, but of which the west bays are ancient. The portico and vestibule of this otherwise unattractive edifice are as beautiful specimens of Saracenic-Norman architecture as are to be seen in Europe, and the people gathered in the open space before Il Duomo and on the steps of the portico were as Oriental in aspect as the folk one may see across the water in Tunis or Biskra at the door of a mosque.

From the cathedral we followed the windings of a very picturesque street, and a corner or two away came to the Monastery of San Pietro, which we could easily believe had been at one time a Moorish palace. A pointed archway carried a covered bridge—a "Bridge of Sighs" in miniature—from the dormitories of the monks over the causeway to a little mosque-like chapel, and through the arch, down the street, we could see decorated gables, lattices, and windows with curled and twining iron bars, quaint porches, and quainter porticos of carved pillars supporting balconies ornamented with Arabesque and Norman designs. Farther down the rambling thoroughfare, in the side wall of a palace that trespassed boldly on the roadway, a richly carved casement suggested a window of the Alhambra at Granada. This peep was charmingly picturesque; it recalled a picture of a street in Bagdad, one of the wood-cuts in our well-thumbed, dog-eared copy of *The Arabian Nights*, and it needed but turbans and Oriental gowns to metamorphose the passers-by into Abdallahs of the land or Sindbads of

the sea. What wonder, therefore, that we lingered long day-dreaming near this "bit" so Oriental in design and spirit, hoping actually to behold Aladdin, and to hear the street-cry "New lamps for old!"

Along the winding streets, through the golden fog which added mystery to our strange and bewildering surroundings, stopping now to examine an old and moss-grown arched gateway, or to admire the carvings on porticos or double lancet windows, now to inspect the façade of a chapel or a mediæval palace, we found our way, thanks to the guidance of Il Ispettore, to the Piazza di Municipio, where, curious to think of it, we beheld the municipal theatre of a city seated among the clouds on the top of a mountain half a mile in height. From the piazza we began to ascend to the higher level of the rock, on the verge of which stands an ancient ivy-clad castle, founded, so runs tradition, by Dædalus, the father of Icarus. We trustingly took our guide's word for it that there was a castle somewhere above and beyond us, and continued on upward through the mist, which, as we ascended, became more transparent and filmy, until we felt the warmth of the noon-day sun, and beheld its image, a silver bowl floating high above the haze.

We left the houses behind us, and, entering a garden, explored its paths winding between hedges of white-thorn in blossom, and, significant of the meeting of the temperate and tropical zones, fichi d' India and cacti. We made our way amid trees and shrubbery to an open space in the centre of the garden, where we sat down to rest on a stone settle in the midst of beds of roses, where were palms, flowering aloes, giant euphorbia, where ripe fruit hung ungath-

ered on blossoming orange-trees, where there were laurels and pomegranates, fig, almond, and cherry trees, great pines, ilex and pinnated oak, beech and chestnut, bamboo, mulberry ; where wistaria, morning-glories, Virginia-creepers, and bougainvillea disputed with the ivy for possession of the trellises and garden-walls. Bewildering and wonderful confusion of things botanical, setting at naught the seasons and the order of nature, for in that small enclosure were to be seen growing in the open air all species and varieties of plants collected from all latitudes between Sahara and the Baltic Sea.

As we sat musing, expectant, the mist dissolved. The sunlight glorified the place. And there, just beyond the greenery overlooking the garden, arose the mysterious castle, its gray walls wet with fog, glistening like frosted silver in the intense light of the April sun. Below it swept tossing cataracts of cloud, the rock from which it rose into the blue sky floated like an island in a sea of snow-white foam, but nowhere else in all space was there wrack or vestige of the human under-world whence we had ventured on our pilgrimage to the ancient abode of pagan gods. Across the yoke of the mountain, from precipice to precipice, plunging downward on each side of the fortress into the sea of mist, was a deep moat cut in the living rock.

So much we had time to note, and then the clouds swept across the picture, and the vision disappeared. So for hours, while we haunted the precincts of the castle, it appeared and disappeared, to reappear and vanish momentarily, as the wind, the shepherd of the clouds, drove his flocks landward from the sea.

Curious to know more of the form and contents of the Castle of Monte San Giuliano, we found our way out of the garden down to an open space whence a causeway led up from the city to its citadel. Ascending this steep approach, with the castle walls on our left and a precipice on our right hand, we came to the main entrance of the tower we had seen from our seat in the garden. We knocked loudly, boldly summoning the warden to admit us. This he did by opening a small wicket-gate, and, entering in, we found ourselves in a part of the edifice which to-day is used as a prison. Passing through a series of gloomy, vaulted chambers, we came to the castle court-yard, grass-grown and covered with rubbish and fragments of ruined walls. Gates and doors were opened to admit us, and closed behind us by the warden, whose large bunch of curious antique keys jangled at his belt as he led the way. At last we entered the precincts of a temple, invaded the "holy of holies," where anciently had stood the altar of Venus-Erycina.

Ascending a flight of ruined steps we passed into the court-yard, a forsaken garden, where, in the midst of a wilderness of greenery, we discovered an ancient well, around the edge of which feathery grasses trembled in the gentle breeze, and nodding flowers peeping timorously below beheld their pretty faces mirrored in the crystal water at the bottom. Clinging to moss-covered stones and rooted in the crevices of the masonry there hung graceful festoons and knots of "maidenhair" (*Capillus Veneris*), which doubtless had suggested the name "The Bath of Venus."

Mounting the wall of the court yard we looked down into a chasm, across which once hung a wonder-

ful bridge, a work of enchantment, according to an early legend, and to-day, in corroboration of the tale, called "Il Ponte del Diavolo." In ancient times the span was known as the "Arch of Dædalus." Whether the Diabolos of monkish lore or Dædalus of old built the bridge we do not pretend to be able to decide. We merely record the fact that in Sicilian dialect the sound of Dædalus runs trippingly into that of Diavolo. Perhaps the unclassical inhabitants of Monte San Giuliano (not knowing who the Diavolo Dædalus was) have given their arch enemy more than his due, seeing that the bridge was built long before "that old serpent" was heard of—at least, so far to the westward of his original bailiwick, the Garden of Eden.

Outside of the court-yard we climbed to the top of a ruined tower poised on the edge of a cliff, whence we caught glimpses through the fog of crags and rocks far below us. Once as we looked the mists lifted in the east, and we obtained a fleeting but magnificent view of all the country - side and the sea, stretching far to the north and the northeast. Confronting us was the lofty peak of San Vito, and towards the south, in the order named, Saragio, Laccie, San Barnaba, and Rocca-corvo, grand mountain-peaks all of them. Close at hand, lower than Monte San Giuliano, the promontory of Cofano extends its massive, adder-shaped head into the Tyrrhenian Sea. A grand and wonderful spectacle, but quickly gone! Again the fog came down upon us, therefore, we can but faintly imagine all the glory of the prospect which is revealed to those who stand upon the summit of Mount Eryx on a perfectly clear day.

**MONTE SAN GIULIANO (REVX). TRAPANI**



Continuing our explorations, we passed through bowers and trellises overgrown with vines, threaded mazes and secret passages that led us into giant towers and lofty, roofless halls, ventured into the gloomy recesses of keep and donjon, climbed broken stairways to crumbling battlements and ruined platforms, where, ages ago, armored men kept watch and ward. The romance of the place, the weird picturesqueness of all we saw, cast a potent spell upon us, tempted us on and on, and we wandered here and there, up and down, as if vainly seeking an exit from a clueless labyrinth, forgetful of the magic word that alone could open passage for us to the outer world. How long we might have tarried in this romance-inspiring, superstition-awakening spot we cannot tell. Certainly the setting sun had found us there had not Il Ispettore, practical man of action and of this world, looked at his time-piece, and, remembering, uttered the forgotten "open sesame," Colazione! (breakfast). In the twinkling of an eye we came back to every-day existence, and discovered that we were very hungry. Hunger lent us wings. Our long fast served to clear our brains of vapping conceits, of pagan goddesses, mediæval enchanters, and the like, and we made haste to be gone, to repair the waste of tissue, to satisfy the cravings of three nineteenth-century appetites.

At the official residence of the companion of our morning rambles we found collazione waiting for us, and never did hot coffee and sundry viands of tempting appetency prove more welcome or taste more delicious than did the feast so unexpectedly spread for us by our kind host. "May his shadow never grow less!"

After luncheon Signor Guerreri accompanied us to the locanda where we had left our equipage. It was awaiting us, with horses fully harnessed, ready to depart. We bade farewell to our "guide, philosopher, and friend," entered our vettura, passed through the gate of Eryx, plunged downward into the mists that rolled up the mountain-side, and the City of Venus was caught up into the golden clouds and vanished from our sight.

## XXVI

### GIRGENTI

The Land of the Greeks — Acragas — Agrigentum — Mons Camicus — Ruined Temples — "Fairest of Mortal Cities" — La Rupe Atenea.

AT last the day of our often-postponed departure came, and with many regrets we bade farewell to Palermo, the city in which we had dwelt for all too short a time so pleasantly. At two o'clock in the afternoon of as fair a day as ever shone upon Il Conco d' Oro, we took train for Girgenti, and entered upon a new phase of our Sicilian expedition. Until now we had had to do with the Carthaginians, the Saracens, the Normans (we do not mention the Romans, because that race has left but few reminders of its occupation of the land, being destructive rather than constructive in its Sicilian policy). Hereafter we were to behold the wonderful relics of Greek civilization, relics that have outlasted twenty-five centuries, defying all attempts of the Romans, the early Christians, the Saracens, the Normans, and of the modern Sicilians themselves, to destroy these reminders of the grandest of all epochs in the marvellous history of Sicily.

The railway from Palermo to Girgenti runs eastwardly along the seashore, passing Bagheria and Termini. Six miles beyond the latter town the train,

turning inland, enters the valley of Il Fiume Torto, and, ascending to the interior table-lands, passes Cerda and other quaint towns perched high on the mountain steeps. At forty-four miles from Palermo we arrived at Roccapalumba, where we changed carriages for Girgenti. The town of Alia, from a rugged peak, two thousand four hundred feet in height, looks down upon Roccapalumba and the desolate valley of the Torto; and we could trace the highway, four miles in length, where it crept in serpentine coils upward from the station to the city gate.

From Roccapalumba onward the scenery is barren and wild, the hills bare and treeless, great rocks and boulders of monstrous shapes cast fantastic shadows on the mountain-side. Here and there, all along the road, uplifted on crags and pinnacles, are the ruins of Norman and Saracen castles, picturesque reminders of bloody wars between Christians and infidels.

At an elevation of more than two thousand feet above sea-level we cross the water-shed between the Tyrrhenian and African seas, and, at forty-eight miles from Palermo, reach Lercara, in the neighborhood of which are the northernmost of the celebrated sulphur mines of Sicily. The aspect of all this country is strange and unnatural, the soil unfruitful, and the vegetation stunted and discolored by the fumes set free in the process of reducing the sulphur ore to commercial form.

Traversing the ancient border-land, to the west of which was once Carthaginian territory, to the east of which were the ancient marches of the Greeks, the train rapidly descends to the south shore, and at eighty-four miles from Palermo reaches the town of

Girgenti. Night had fallen, and as we were driven away from the station we beheld the lights of the town on Mons Camicus twinkling high above us, like a cluster of stars shining through a calm night. About three-quarters of a mile beyond the town we came to the Hôtel des Temples, where we were made welcome and comfortably bestowed for the night.

Bright and early the next morning Signor Francesco Ciotta, Consular Agent of the United States at Girgenti, waited upon us and politely offered to act as our cicerone during our explorations of the precincts and environments of his native city. We gratefully accepted his proposition, and we had good reason to congratulate ourselves that Signor Ciotta found it in his heart to befriend the strangers within his gates.

At a distance of a little more than one mile from the African Sea, Mons Camicus and La Rupe Atenea stand boldly up one thousand feet, overlooking a table-land which extends from the base of the southern front of the two rocky heights half-way to the water. This table-land terminates at the verge of a row of cliffs that drop two hundred feet to a plain which gently declines to the beach. Mons Camicus was the acropolis of ancient Acragas, and La Rupe Atenea a sacred precinct, containing, among other edifices, a wonderful Temple of Minerva; hence its name, the "Athenæum." All the ground lying between the base of Mons Camicus and the Athenæum was at one time covered by the houses of the ancient Greek city. To-day Girgenti, shrunken to its original proportions, finds space for all its dwellings on the crest of Mons Camicus, while the heights of La Rupe Atenea are strewn with the ruins of fortifications and other

buildings, which are not, however, of great antiquity. Along the seaward limit of the table-land, on the verge of the cliffs, midway between the beach and La Rupe Atenea, the people of Acragas built the great sea-wall of their city, and within its battlements erected a row of temples, six in all, the ruins of which are to-day the wonder and admiration of all beholders. The fertile pianura is one vast meadow-land, here and there planted with orange, lemon, and olive groves and orchards of almond-trees, the latter in full bloom on the day of which we are writing.

Did the ruined temples stand alone on the barren plain, as do the ruins at Selinus and at Pæstum, they would even then be indescribably beautiful, but the fact that they appear in the midst of the scenery, than which nothing can be lovelier, adds to their charm; the eye loves to dwell upon their fair proportions, and memory preserves their superb and picturesque outlines and surroundings. The material of which the six temples are constructed presents a most delightful contrast to the variegated greenery by which the ruins are partly overgrown. In the morning sunlight the yellow sandstone exhibits delicate tints of pearl, shell-pink, and violet, accented by blue-black shadows of velvety softness; the deep blue sky bends over the golden shrines surrounded by greensward and bright flowers innumerable; the air is heavy with the odor of almond blossoms; nightingales, swinging on the boughs of venerable olive-trees, pipe their softest notes, and larks rise singing from the meadows. It is impossible to believe that it is no later in the year than the last week of February—we breathe the delicious air of June.

The Temple of Juno Lucina stands at the southeastern angle of the table-land above the bed of the Acragas, now called Il Fiume Biagio, a small stream which flows across the plain to join the Hypsas, Il Fiume Drago, and form Il Fiume Girgenti. At the mouth of the latter water-course once stood Emporio, the seaport of Acragas. The temple, which is supposed to have been erected between the years 480 and 500 B.C., is elevated on a lofty platform (stylobate), and approached by a grand flight of steps leading to the eastern portico. It had six columns in front and six in the rear, and twenty-two others at the sides, all of which were fluted. It is Doric in style, and belongs to the best period of that school of architecture. The columns in the front are in a fair state of preservation, and still uphold one course of the blocks of the entablature. Two perfect columns at the southeast corner, united at their tops by a monolith, are all that remains of the front of the temple, save one other half-ruined column standing alone. Of the structure of the south side there remain but four or five fragments of columns all much worn by the sirocco, "the remorseless destroyer of the temples of the gods."

Following the picturesque ruin of the city walls for a few hundred yards westward, passing many tombs and sepulchral niches hewn in the inner surface of the battlements, we came to the Temple of Concord. This edifice, almost precisely similar in form to the Temple of Juno, but slightly larger, owes its present state of preservation to the fact that in the third century it was converted into a Christian church and rededicated to "S. Gregorio delle Rapi"—"St. Gregory of the Turnips." "The Temple of Concord has withstood

many centuries; its light style of architecture closely approximates to the present standard of the beautiful and tasteful, so that, compared with Pæstum, it is, as it were, the shape of a god to that of a giant."\*

Although much smaller than the Temple of Neptune at Pæstum, the Temple of Concord is in all respects more beautiful and interesting to study. When it was transformed into a Christian church the spaces between the columns were walled up and the cella roofed with wooden beams and a superstructure. These incongruous additions have been removed, and the original plan of the temple may be studied more in detail than is possible in other Doric structures in Sicily or elsewhere.

West, again, of the Temple of Concord, three hundred yards or more on the line of the ancient ramparts, lies a vast confusion of enormous blocks, in the midst of which stands a solitary column of sandstone marking the site, so it is supposed, of a Temple of Hercules, a much larger structure than the two temples above mentioned. For this sanctuary Zeuxis painted his famous portrait of Alcmene, mother of Hercules, and from it Cicero tells us Verres attempted by night to steal the statue of Hercules in order that it might adorn his palace.

Close by the Temple of Hercules, and below it, are the ruins of La Porta Aurea ("The Golden Gate" of Agragas), by which the Roman legions under Lævinus were admitted when, in 210 B.C., the Numidian mercenaries under Mutines betrayed the Carthaginian garrison to the besiegers. From that day the name

\* GOETHE. *Italienische Reise*.

GIRGENTI. FROM TEMPLE OF JOVE



of Acragas disappeared from the pages of history, or was disguised under its Roman form, Agrigentum.

Returning within the city limits, we stood upon the table-land immediately opposite the Temple of Hercules, where is a vast ruin, the parts of which lie scattered over the plain like "the bones of a gigantic skeleton." These are the remains of the great Temple of the Olympian Jupiter, the only temple within the ancient limits of Acragas now surely known by its ancient name. Nothing remains of the edifice but fallen fragments of stone, but we may gain some idea of its vast size, of the enormous proportions of its parts, from the fact that the flutings of its ruined columns are so broad that a large man, standing with his back against the stone, barely fills the space. Each column has twenty-two flutings and is  $14\frac{3}{4}$  feet in diameter—that is to say,  $44\frac{1}{4}$  feet in circumference and 53 feet in length. The temple itself measured 340 feet by 160 feet, and Diodorus states that it was 120 feet in height. It was, therefore, the second largest temple ever erected or dedicated by the Greeks to any god, being surpassed by the Temple of Diana at Ephesus only, and greatly exceeding in size the Temple of Apollo at Selinus, the latter the third of the great temples of the world. It is true, then, that two, at least, of the temples of Sicily were of grander dimensions than any of the temples of ancient Greece. This fact alone, if others were wanting, bears witness to the wealth of the Greek cities of Sicily, and especially to the magnificence of Selinus and Acragas. In the cella lies a gigantic statue, more than twenty feet in height, one of three caryatides (telamones) which supported a portion of the entablature. Gre-

gorovius describes this giant in a sentence of poetic power: "And here, stretched out, this weird giant-form appears like a god—Hercules himself, who has lain him down, in the midst of the ruin of this temple, for a sleep of centuries, not to be awakened by earthquakes and the strife of elements, nor by any syllable of the history of the little human race."

This giant figure suggested to the men of Girgenti their municipal motto:

*"Signet Agrigentum mirabile aula Gigantum."*

Still farther to the westward of the Temple of Jupiter we found the most picturesque ruin of all—four columns of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, surrounded by old olive and almond trees in the midst of a tangled growth of vines, crocuses, lilies, asphodel, and scarlet and purple poppies. This edifice originally had six columns in each portico, and thirteen at the sides, all of which were thrown down and lay in ruin for many centuries. Not long ago four of the columns—two of the west portico and the two adjoining them on the north side—were carefully restored and placed in position, and now uphold an angle of the cornice and entablature. Truly the picture composed of this fragment of the old temple justifies its re-erection. The four columns form so charming a feature in a lovely scene that to have replaced them on their old foundations bespeaks the good taste and artistic judgment of the antiquarian who re-established them. Would that all restorers of Sicilian antiquities had been endowed with as nice a sense of the fitness of things! There is evidence that the four restored

columns, like all other parts of the temple in question, were originally coated with stucco; and on the cornice there are traces of bright pigments, red, blue, and black, additional proof that the Greeks painted the exteriors of certain temples in gaudy colors.

Below the Temple of Castor and Pollux, in a ravine drained by a rivulet that falls into the ancient Hypsas, there are the remains of a great "piscina," or fish-pond; and, on the far side of the Hypsas, a single column in the midst of an almond grove marks where the Temple of Vulcan stood in a garden the beauties of which are celebrated by Diodorus.

From the temples we followed a road leading to La Rupe Atenea and ascended the heights on which formerly stood the Temple of Athene, which gave its name to the rock. Near the eastern end of the Athenæum are the remains of another temple, supposed to have been sacred to Demeter and her daughter Persephone. This old edifice was converted by the Normans into a Christian church; but almost nothing remains of their structure or embellishment, and there is little of interest to repay one for the climb except the view to be had from the edge of the cliffs; that is, indeed, well worth a longer and more fatiguing expedition.

As one stands looking towards the sea, the city of Girgenti on Mons Camicus rises to view on the right hand; beyond it a range of hills sinks gradually to the African Sea. In front of La Rupe Atenea, and far below, extends the table-land once occupied by the houses of old Acragas, now planted with almond and olive trees, in the midst of which stand the ruins of the grand old temples. Beyond the lower plain the waves of the

sea fall upon a beach of yellow sand. Quiet and peaceful is the scene, and one cannot readily believe that in the years gone by all these fair meadows had been the camping-ground of vast armies besieging a populous city. Acragas, the ancient, is desolate; naught remains of all its edifices but the ruined fanes of the dead gods and the broken range of city walls and battlements.

"We travelled in the prints of olden wars,  
Yet all the land was green."

Curious it was to stand in the silence of the golden afternoon and think what ages had elapsed since, on the altar of the largest of the temples, offerings had been made by Greek priests to Zeus. On that same altar human sacrifices had been burned to placate the wrath of Moloch. Perhaps on the very spot where we were standing Phalaris set up his brazen image of a bull, the burning, fiery furnace into which he cast his victims whose roarings the remorseless tyrant likened to "the bellowings of the devouring beast."

## XXVII

### THE HEART OF SICILY

**Girgenti to Caltanissetta—Sulphur District—Veritable Infernal Regions—Kal-at-al-Nisa ("Fortress of the Women")—A Strange Ride—An Ancient Albergo—"Un Ballo in Maschera"—"Sermons and 'Gazzoza.'"**

LATE in the afternoon we took a train bound from Girgenti to Caltanissetta. In the compartment of the railway carriage we found Signor C——, of Licata, a most polite and well-informed gentleman, to whom we became indebted for many courtesies, as will appear in the sequel.

The railway ascends from Girgenti, winding up to the heights of Verluccia, where we saw orchards of almond-trees in bloom, and then enters a desolate land of sulphur mines, a dreary country, which presents the appearance of having been but recently the scene of violent convulsions of nature—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions. At Aragona-Caldare the branch road to Caltanissetta leaves the main line and passes through a country the sadness and weirdness of which may be guessed from the names and history of some of the stations along the route: Comitini ("The Sulphurous"); Erbessus, where, in 262 B.C., Hanno, the Carthaginian, slaughtered the Roman garrison which vainly tried to protect the military stores deposited

there for use in the siege of Agrigentum ; Rocalmoto, called by the Arabs Rah-al-Mot ("The Village of Death"). About nine at night we arrived at our journey's end, Caltanissetta, the seat of a bishopric, a town of Saracenic origin, containing at the present time not fewer than thirty thousand inhabitants. In our journey we had ascended from the sea-level to the high table-lands of central Sicily ; the thermometer had fallen many degrees, there was "a nipping and an eager air," and snow was falling.

At the dimly lighted station, after we had given up our tickets to the official at the exit, we were left to our own devices, and had it not been for Signor C—— we should have been utterly at a loss what to do with ourselves, where to turn, what albergo to choose—if there were a choice—and how to find it when chosen. But our companion was a man of many resources, a brisk and bustling person, of whom his compatriots are justified in declaring "*Egli non si lascia mettere mosche sul naso.*"\* The Sicilians have another proverb: "He that has no head must have legs"; and, in Shakespearian phrase, we should have had occasion and opportunity on that inclement evening for "tasting" ours, in a dreary ramble about the town in search of lodgings, had it not been for a brilliant idea which inspired our guide. Begging us to exercise patience and keep ourselves dry in the waiting-room, Signor C—— disappeared into the night, was gone a matter of ten minutes, and returned triumphantly announcing that "*un veicolo*" was upon the point of arriving.

\* "*He does not suffer flies to light upon his nose.*" — Sicilian proverb.

The vehicle which followed Signor C—— from the place in which he had discovered it to the station proved to be “la vagone di posta”—a mail-wagon. By the light of the solitary lamp which twinkled feebly where the wagon drew up at the platform, the veicolo looked like a prison-van, and our gloomy surroundings invoked sufficiently disagreeable fancies that were to be woven of the suggestion. We preferred, however, to regard the conveyance in a less lugubrious light, and, as its appearance lent itself to the illusion, we transformed it, in our imagination, into a circus-van, intended for the safe conveyance of “trick animals” attached to “a show.” A dancing bear belike! The latter pleasing fancy was strangely verified when a round and burly form emerged head first from the forward end of the van, and, placing its two fore-paws upon the back of the horse, turned itself about and descended slowly and clumsily to solid earth, where it stood in silence erect upon its hind-legs, an uncouth, shaggy, hairy monster. To whatever genus of four-footed things it belonged, it was a mannerly and gentle beast and made a show of helping la signora to her place on the driver’s seat, to which her companion climbed without assistance. Signor C—— mounted upon the rear step of the veicolo, the amiable monster, stepping to the head of the horse, gave voice to a loud cry, “Ah-ee!” and the “Strange Adventures of a (Mail) Phaeton” began. We entered the precincts of a town the streets of which were so dimly lighted that we felt, but did not behold, the ruts and inequalities of the pavement. We could hear the cries of the beggars who hobbled beside the wagon, gibbering, moaning, like the wailing voices that accosted

Æneas "on the dismal shores of Acheron," and were conscious that we were followed by an ever-increasing throng of "poveri." We knew that the streets were muddy, for we had seen the splashed and spattered condition of the *veicolo* by the dim lights of the station lamp. It snowed and rained by turns during the ten minutes consumed in driving to the *albergo*. It was cold, and gusts of wind turned inside out the umbrellas we attempted to hold in front of us. We were hungry, albeit not as hungry as the troop of *poveri* who chanted their "miserere" as they limped beside our conveyance. We became chilled, and shivered although wrapped in our thickest cloaks and lap-robes, and envied our conductor his garments of sheep-skin and the *cappotto* he wore, as an extra covering, to shield him from the cold and wet.

Nevertheless we laughed. Not because we were cold and hungry—surely not at the sad plight of our escort of *poveri*; but it struck us that our situation and surroundings were sufficiently fantastical and absurd to warrant laughter. We congratulated ourselves that things were no worse; especially, that we had not been obliged to go *albergo*-hunting on foot through the storm. That would have been no laughing matter. But here were we entering a mysterious town of which we knew nothing, except that it was called by Arabs, centuries ago, *Kal-at-al-Nisa*. ("Fortress of the Women"); conducted by a creature that we could readily fancy had been born under the constellation of *Ursa Major*; seated in a mail-wagon, as if we had posted ourselves (from the Great Bear only knows where!), and were on our way, properly stamped and post-marked, to the address at which we were to be

TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA. CIRGENTI





finally delivered. If incongruity be the *causa causans* of laughter, surely our adventure contained the elements of much mirth.

Finally, we halted in a dark street at the foot of a still darker and very narrow lane which led from darkness visible into utter blackness. Ursa Major advanced to the side of the *veicolo*, and, in a great, gruff voice, like the voice of the Great Big Bear whose words so terrified "Little Goldenhair," requested I Signori to descend. Signor C—— explained that we were in the neighborhood of the *albergo*. I Signori descended. Ursa Major seized our traps and belongings, and waddled off into the almost palpable blackness of the lane. Stumblingly and with uncertain tread, we blindly followed our leader, and, after a short walk over wretched pavement, through pools and puddles, hearing mysterious noises made by people in lightless, fireless cellars, smelling all kinds of dank and bilgy odors, we came to the *albergo*, of which, if we ever knew it, we have forgotten the name.

"Whate'er our stages may have been," we sigh to recall our welcome at this particular inn. Ursa Major dropped our dripping satchels and rugs on the sloppy sill of the front door and grumbled at the tip with which we supplemented a double fare. We placated the insatiable monster, who condescended to growl "Buona sera" as he waddled off into the darkness, which instantly devoured him. We had arrived unexpectedly at an *albergo* where few travellers ever arrive late any evening, particularly on such an evening of storm and bitter cold, where *forestieri* in general are rarities, and "Americani" curiosities of phenomenal interest. This fact we gathered later

from a conversation our "cameriera" held with our "cameriere" in our hearing:

"What do they speak, these Americani?" asked the buxom daughter of Caltanissetta.

"They speak la lingua francesa."

"They are not English, then?"

"I believe not."

"That is droll! Il signore has yellow hair and la signora red cheeks like the Inglesa who was here last year. It is far to this America?"

"Credo. Giacomo did not reach Argentina for five weeks."

I Signori felt that they indeed were "rare birds in a strange land."

We did not fare badly at the albergo in Caltanissetta, when our arrival was made known to "mine host" by Signor C——, who was a welcome and frequent visitor at the hotel. The landlord and landlady, the head waiter and his two assistants, and the cook, made obeisance to us as we passed through the main hall, and the "facchino" and the "cameriera" who showed us to our rooms kissed our hands.

When we had warmed ourselves as best we could over a pan of glowing charcoal, being nearly suffocated during the operation, and had seated ourselves at a table in the dining-room, we forgot our troubles and curiously made note of all we saw, endeavoring to translate as much as possible of all we heard. There was much in the place and all our surroundings to interest and amuse us. We seemed to have dropped suddenly from time present backward through centuries, to find ourselves, if not in the Middle Ages, at least in the days long before stage-coaches, when travelling

was uncomfortable, if not dangerous, and when travellers were few and far between.

At a large oblong table on one side of the room there were seated ten or twelve officers belonging to the regiments quartered in Caltanissetta during the social disturbances. These military gentlemen were in full uniform and had their swords by their sides and wore spurs; were, in fact, arrayed in the full panoply of war, in which Italian officers invariably appear on or off duty. They were having a merry time of it over "bottiglie" of Caltanissetta, the very light, very thin, very sour wine of the country, and "fiaschetti" of Marsala, a sweeter, heavier, more inspiring beverage of Sicilians who can afford to pay two or three lire a bottle for the best of the wines made in Sicily.

At another table was a party of "mercanti," travelling salesmen, and sulphur-brokers, who cast admiring glances at the officers, and were evidently much gratified when the military gentlemen recognized them, or from time to time chatted affably with them across the full width of the dining-room. After the padrone himself had spread a clean cloth upon the table at which we were seated, the head waiter brought in a large platter containing a mess of "macaroni con pomodoro." This being disposed of, we were served with a "risotto" and a "contorno," the latter an immense sausage, with "fave" (broad beans) and the inevitable "carciofi" (artichokes), without which no Sicilian dinner can be properly served. Then there was a dish which we suspected to be goat's flesh, and we were glad that by this time our appetites had been appeased that we could, with grace and politeness, decline to partake of it, explaining to the padrone that after such delicious

macaroni and such a risotto it was impossible even to taste of other delicacies. A "dolce" and fruit completed our repast.

After supper, when la signora, pleading fatigue, had retired to the seclusion of her apartment, one of the officers approached our companion and suggested that Signor C—— and his friend might find amusement at "un ballo in maschera," at the Caltanissetta Theatre. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the night, of which we had already had large experience, our desire to see something of the social life of the better class of people of a typical Sicilian provincial town inspired us to set out with our new friends, and, after a short walk through the cold and wet, we arrived at the scene of the festivities. We paid one lira apiece for our tickets, and, having deposited our coats and hats in the cloak-room, for which privilege we were charged ten centesimi, we entered the auditorium and found ourselves in the midst of a crowd of masqueraders, whose costumes were not especially remarkable, the larger part of the assemblage, men and women, finding sufficient disguise in ordinary dominos of cheap, highly colored calicoes.

If the truth must be told, the spectacle was not highly attractive nor interesting. The music was not of a quality to please the ear, and the people did not seem to be inspired with the idea that they had come to the ball in search of amusement. The dancers whirled about in a listless, weary sort of way; there was little merriment; people sat in groups and seemed to be talking of sadder things than dancing and music, and their present attempt to relieve the misery of their lives was a pathetic failure. So we found this

strange and solemn ballo in maschera to be, and we were not sorry when Signor C—— proposed that we take our departure from a scene that lives in our memory as a sad and sorrowful spectacle of careworn, hopeless people trying to make merry in spite of troubles that crush their hearts and embitter their existence.

In the matter of beds we did not fare badly at our albergo. True it is we did not explore the mysteries of our "letti," nor venture into the dark corners of our chamber. But if tourists will insist upon visiting out-of-the-way places, where the manners and customs of people who lived two or three hundred years ago are thought to be good enough for the people of to-day, they must not peep and pry or examine too closely into arrangements which, no doubt, in the sixteenth century would have entitled the albergo in Caltanissetta to be considered a first-class house of entertainment, supplied with all the conveniences and comforts of life.

## XXVIII

### "THE LAND OF DEMETER"

Enna — *Castrum Enna* — Castrogiovanni — Worship of Ceres  
— Pagan Rites — Christian Ceremonies — Lake Pergusa —  
"Flowers of Persephone."

THE magnificent forests from which the Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, and Normans obtained timber for building ships have long since disappeared; the coast and interior table-lands and plains of Sicily have been denuded; everywhere the felling of trees has gone on until now less than five per cent. of all the compass of the island contains timber of any kind, and only here and there, on the sides of Ætna, are any pines. As was to be expected, this denudation of the island has served to increase the dryness of the climate. Nevertheless, the soil of Sicily is generally fruitful, although one constantly hears the statement that "fields which in the days of the Greeks returned one hundred times the amount of seed sown now yield but sevenfold, and that only one-ninth of all the land is productive." \*

Certainly all the country in the heart of Sicily through which we passed from Roccapalumbra to Gir-

\* LE VICOMTE COMBES DE LESTRADE. *La Sicile sous la Monarchie de Savoie*, page 15.

genti, from Girgenti to Caltanissetta, and from the latter city to Castrogiovanni, is a dreary, treeless waste, and we found it almost impossible to believe the tales told of the fertility of these table-lands during the days of Greek and Roman dominion, when Sicily was called the Land of Demeter, the "all-nourishing mother," the "protectress of husbandmen," and known as the "Island of Persephone," the goddess of spring-time and flowers.

Castrogiovanni is wonderfully placed on the crest of a rock more than two thousand six hundred feet in height, and is surrounded by unscalable cliffs and precipices that it forms "one of the most remarkable natural fortresses in the world." Pliny described it as inexpugnable, and the Saracens knew it as "The Key of Sicily." Notwithstanding the fact that it frequently changed hands during the Punic Wars, *Castrum Ennæ* was never captured by assault, being delivered, now to the Romans, now to the Carthaginians, by treacherous generals who betrayed their military trusts. The Saracens were unable to take it for thirty-one years after first laying siege to it, and the Normans did not finally reduce it until they had practically ruled in all other parts of Sicily for a quarter of a century.

The railway from Caltanissetta approaches Castrogiovanni through a country that little resembles the land described by ancient authors. The dense forests, the brooks and lakes that made the "heart of Sicily" (or, as some classical authors called it, "the navel of Sicily") so beautiful in the eyes of the Greeks and the Romans, have all disappeared; it is no longer "a luxuriant garden where the hounds lose

scent of the game amid the fragrance of the myriad flowers of Persephone." Great bare hills rise everywhere like the billows of a vast and troubled sea.

At all the stations we saw trains laden with that "Gold of Sicily," sulphur, as if to remind one that this weird land is indeed the very gate of the infernal kingdom of Pluto. From the station Castrogiovanni-Calascibetta roads lead in opposite directions to the two citadel cities, seated, each of them, on its own mountain-top, Castrogiovanni more than one thousand feet above Calascibetta, which confronts it to the north. Long before we reached the summit of the Rock of Enna we wished that the chariot of Pluto had been sent to meet us on the arrival of the train. Many times we were tempted, owing to the roughness and muddiness of the road, to trust ourselves in the rickety, rattling, creaking omnibus, drawn by two starved horses, which followed closely behind us, overweighted by our two small portmanteaux and one very small bag of Royal Mail.

Evidently forestieri do not often make their appearance in Castrogiovanni. We "Americani" were objects of curiosity to the inhabitants, who boldly stared, as they grouped themselves around us, whenever we stopped to take note of any of the few interesting sights of their town. Not only did they stare, they commented audibly and with perfect frankness on the appearance of the "stranieri"; and the boldest of them, put forward as fugelmen, asked our Sicilian guide many questions concerning our identity and the business that brought us to the town. "Were I Signori interested in sulphur mines?" "Had they come to buy cattle?" "Did I Signori wish to

TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX. GIRGENTI





buy lands?" "If I Signori were not English 'mi-lordi,' were they not those German engineers who had been employed by the government to fortify Castrogiovanni?" "It would be a happy day for Castrogiovanni when that work was begun, for many people who were dying of hunger could find work to do on the fortifications."

After we had been thus "buttonholed" in front of the cathedral (founded in 1307, but of little present interest), we moved to a neighboring church, before which we halted to examine the few remaining fragments of Sicilian-Gothic architecture. One of our former interlocutors came running after us and eagerly inquired if the forestieri were really Americani. Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he shouted to his congeners, who, hastening to where we were standing, gathered around us and listened intently while our guide made further answer to innumerable questions concerning I Signori, who were "davvero Americani." "I Signori were from New York, not, as was supposed, from Buenos Ayres." "They had not been in Argentina." "I Signori lived more than a thousand miles from Nuova Orleano." "New York was more than five thousand miles from Buenos Ayres." This last bit of information was received with extreme wonder, not to say incredulity. "I Signori were not travelling on business; they had come to Castrogiovanni on a pleasure trip; they were making a 'giro' in Sicily." "No, I Signori were not 'molto opulenti.' Il Signore was a 'scrittore,' a 'giornalista,' 'un povero diavolo' who worked for his bread." This last statement was received with scorn and derision, for in Castrogiovanni, as elsewhere in

Sicily, it was perfectly well known to be an indisputable fact that all Americani were molto ricchi—millionaires, in fact.

Although Castrogiovanni is inhabited by more than fifteen thousand souls, it is a lonely and dismal place. Wonderful are all the prospects to be had from the verge of its cliffs, and often all the land about it lies golden in sunlight, the mountains robed in marvellous colors, but the aspect of the town itself is sad and dreary. Of all the hundreds of squalid, comfortless houses there are none fairly describable as the homes of happy folk. The people who inhabit the dark dwellings are woe-begone creatures who shuffle about the narrow, dirty streets with discontent written in every line of their careworn faces. Verily, it seems a cruel mockery even to think of the town as once the abode of the "Goddess of Plenty." For twenty centuries Castrogiovanni has been sinking deeper and deeper in the "Slough of Despond," and to-day it would seem as if the town had reached the depths of its misery. The precincts of the city are horrible places even when the sun is shining, and there are many dark days in Castrogiovanni; for, seated on its mountain-height, it draws to it the silent awe of mists and clouds and hides itself in fogs that shut out all sight of the sun and the green world. Perhaps the hungry folk of Castrogiovanni dream of the far-away ancient days when Ceres filled their storehouses with abundant golden grain; they do keep alive, so it is said, the traditions of Demeter and Persephone, although it is more than likely they do not remember the names of the ancient protectresses of pagan Enna.

On the day of the fête of the "Madonna of all the

Graces " her worshippers place before her statue large sheaves of grain and bunches of wild flowers, and form processions in her honor, composed of men in long, white tunics, who carry flowers in their hands, make offerings of grain and other products of the soil before the altars in the churches. Certain writers pretend that they have discovered in these Christian ceremonies traces of the worship of Demeter and Persephone, although Pitré, the great authority concerning all that appertains to the manners and customs of Sicilians, is not entirely convinced of the soundness of this theory; nevertheless, it seems most reasonable to believe that many of the old pagan rites have been preserved in their essential forms in Christian ceremonies of to-day. In many of the cities of Sicily the people who till the soil deck the altars and holy sepulchre with greenery and deposit flowers at the feet of the crucifix, where they offer prayers that the ingathering of the crops may be successful and the harvest abundant. In many little towns the "campieri" load their beasts of burden with sacks of grain, the first-fruits of the harvest, which are carried to the church, where the priest in all his noblest vestments gives his blessing and returns thanks for the harvest. Then the campieri make their donations to the church. During the harvest time the peasants in certain of the most prosperous valleys of Sicily "preserve a kind of religious behavior." No other songs are heard in the fields but hymns and chants, which always end with the refrain,

"Sia lodatu lu santu sacramentu,  
E viva di lu carminu Maria."

In the morning when the peasants arrive at the

scene of their daily labor the overseer cries aloud "Viva Maria!" His companions reply to him "Viva Maria!" and the silence of the morning is broken by this musical salutation, which is heard arising from fields ripe for the harvest. The songs and choruses with which the reapers begin their work long before sunrise are repeated many times during the day, whenever the laborers rest for a few moments from their toil under the blazing sun. In certain parts of the island the Sicilians have replaced Demeter-Ceres by St. Anthony of Padua, the day of whose festa almost coincides with that day which in former times was sacred to the Goddess of Plenty. Just as Demeter is represented in ancient sculpture as holding grain and flowers, so are statues of St. Anthony decorated with the first fruits of the harvest and the flowers of Enna.

At Caltagirone on the morning of Easter Day the Holy Virgin is carried in procession through the streets of the town and a short distance into the surrounding country, where the cloak of the Virgin falls from her shoulders, permitting the escape of numerous doves, which take wing and fly in all directions. This wandering of the Virgin is supposed to represent her search for her Son, whom she had lost, and it may be that the ceremony is a reminder of the wanderings of Demeter in search of the lost Persephone. The more one studies the mythology of ancient Trinacria, the more firmly does he become convinced that the early Christian fathers founded many ceremonies upon the pagan rites which inspired the devotion of the Greeks and Romans. We can gain much knowledge from the writings of classic authors concerning the ritual of the

worship of Demeter, and it is safe to say that Christian priests have added little to that ritual, have taken little from it, and to-day religious ceremonies practised by the farming communities of Sicily are essentially the same as they were twenty-five centuries ago, with the exception that Christian saints have usurped the honors and dignities of pagan deities. On the first Sunday of October the grain which is intended to be sown is taken to the church, where it is blessed by the priest. The sacks containing this grain must be tied with a thread of flax gathered during a year of great abundance; if this is not done, it is believed the following harvest will be scant and bad. The Sicilian who goes to the fields to sow makes the sign of the cross, and the land when prepared to receive the seed is blessed by the priest, who makes over it the sign of the cross, and sprinkles holy water upon the harrowed fields. The origin of all these ceremonies is to be sought for in the rites observed in the worship of Demeter, whose most magnificent temples anciently stood on the summit of the mountain of Enna.

We did not visit the shores of Lake Pergusa, whence Aidoneus (Pluto) carried away Persephone (Proserpine), and which lies about two miles and a half to the south of Castrogiovanni. Little remains to remind the traveller of the former beauty of the place, and we were loath to dispel the illusion that it still is worthy of the description the poets give of it. We prefer to think of it as Ovid paints it: "A spot at the bottom of a shady vale watered by the plenteous spray of a stream that falls from wooded heights; where nature decks herself in all her varied hues, where the ground is beauteous, carpeted with

flowers of many tints." So we turned back from the very border of the sacred precinct which Milton describes as:

"that fair field  
Of Enna, where Proserpine, gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis  
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain  
'To seek her through the world."

## XXIX

### THE PLAIN OF CATANIA

"L' Usurajo"—A Sicilian Shylock—The Rival Cities—Valley of the Chrysas—Distant Hill Cities—"Faithless Sperlinga"—Hercules—St. Philip of Agira—Ætna—Catania.

NOT even our passion for fine landscapes could overcome our repugnance to the dirt and squalor of Castrogiovanni, and we determined to continue our journey to Catania by a train which was advertised to take its departure about four o'clock in the afternoon. At the station Castrogiovanni-Calascibetta we waited two long, dreary hours, and during all that time it rained in torrents.

A well-to-do-looking old man who was lounging about the waiting-room, mistaking us for subjects of Emperor William, addressed us in German, and we learned that he was a native of Venice, an ex-Austrian soldier who had served in Mexico under the luckless Maximilian. He had enlisted during "the Regeneration" in the army of Victor Emanuel, and had entered Rome, in 1870, with Garibaldi. He told us that the Italian government gives no pension to ex-Austrian soldiers, but in lieu thereof those Venetians who fought under Garibaldi receive a lump sum of fifteen hundred lire.

With his fifteen hundred lire our old Venetian had

bought land near Castrogiovanni, from which he received rental. For nine years he had served as a keeper in the madhouse at Palermo and had managed to save money, although the salary was not large. This we could well believe, for he was a shrewd old fellow and appeared to be well off. Our Sicilian guide said to us in English: "When a soldo leaves his fingers it is after it has been polished"—a formula intended to convey the idea that coin did not easily escape from the grip of the canny, saving old man. He was the only prosperous-looking and hopeful person we had seen that day, and our guide confidently asserted, "He is a usurer!" That this was the case was proved when we asked the old chap if he would not like to return to Venice. "Venice is better than Castrogiovanni, but I have land and some people owe me money, and I can get no cash to take away with me."

Undoubtedly he was one of a large class of thrifty people to be found in all parts of Sicily who make trifling advances to lessees of small farms to enable them to buy seed and cultivate the land. The *usuraji* frequently charge forty or fifty per cent. for the use of the sums they lend to their miserable neighbors. The most common transaction of this sort is the making of a loan, say of sixty lire, on a note or other writing signed in the presence of two friends of the lender, the borrower agreeing to pay half a lira a day until he has paid one hundred lire. From this it can be readily learned that in Sicily small capitalists get large returns on their investments. If the borrower pays the daily interest agreed upon, in two hundred days he will have discharged his debt of sixty lire and will also have paid forty lire additional to the

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ETNA, FROM HARBOR OF CATANIA



usurer, who thus receives sixty-six and two-thirds per cent. for the use of his money for two months. At this rate the usurer can treble his original capital in two years, and it will not be long before he is counted among the rich men of his town; while the miserable contadino, who "pays through the nose," is barely able to keep the wolf from the door of the ruined cabin he calls his home. When the usurer and the tax-gatherer get through with the luckless wight, he is so stripped and squeezed dry that it would have been better if he had not attempted to plant or raise a crop. Indeed, in many instances, it would be better for him if he had never been born!

Castrogiovanni is eighty-three miles distant from Palermo and sixty-eight miles from Catania. From the station Castrogiovanni-Calascibetta the railway descends to the east, traversing the plain of Catania to the Strait of Messina. Shortly after we resumed our journey the rain ceased and sunlight broke through the clouds that still hung over the mountains, on the summits of which stand the two confronting rival towns. We use the words "rival towns" advisedly, for it is said that the inhabitants of these two neighboring communities cherish resentments inherited from their ancestors who lived in the days when rival nations occupied the two citadels, when, for instance, the Moors were still in possession of Castrogiovanni and the Normans were masters of Calascibetta. The two cities took different sides during the civil wars of the fourteenth century, and for ages the valley which separates them has been the scene of many a vendetta, the origin of which none of the contending parties can clearly elucidate.

Beyond Leonforte, a town of ten or twelve thousand souls, the railway descends into the valley of the Dittaino, anciently known as Chrysas, which flows from the hills about Nicosia. The latter curious town, situated high in the mountains, is inhabited by a people who speak a Lombard dialect, which testifies to their descent from the mercenaries who accompanied Roger in his first Sicilian campaign. This mention of the Norman count reminds us that at Rocca di Sarno, near Nicosia, Serlon, the younger brother of Roger and Robert Guiscard, died fighting at the head of his knights. He it was who led the successful charge into Palermo when the capital of Sicily was stormed and captured by the all-conquering Normans in the year 1072 A.D.

From Nicosia a road leads to Sperlinga, two thousand six hundred feet above the sea, a town that, alone of all Sicilian towns, sided with the French during the war of the Sicilian Vespers. For six hundred years the people of Sperlinga have been taunted with the saying, "That which pleased all Sicily displeased Sperlinga." Beyond the "faithless town" the road climbs higher into the mountains to Gangi, the ancient Enguim, a Phœnician colony, where was the celebrated temple of the "Matres Magnæ," or "The Cretan Mothers," said to have been despoiled by Verres. Cicero, however, tells us that it was the Temple of Cybele that Verres desecrated, and characterizes this act as one of the greatest atrocities committed by the prætor. "He stole six breastplates and helmets of brass of Corinthian workmanship, and some huge ewers wrought with exquisite skill, and had his own name inscribed upon them. . . . He left nothing in that most holy

temple except the traces of the religion he had trampled on and the name of Publius Scipio, who had adorned the fane."

Beyond Gangi are two towns, already mentioned as visible from Cefalù—Petràlia di Sopra and Petralia di Sotto, seated more than three thousand three hundred feet above the sea, and, beyond them, Polizzi, founded by the Normans, to which, on account of the lavishness of its inhabitants in the matter of entertaining him, Emperor Frederick II. gave the title of "La Generosa." From Polizzi, past Caltavuturo, the road winds through the valley of Il Fiume Grande downward to the Tyrrhenian Sea. This highway over the mountains, from the plain of Catania to Termini, about sixty-five miles in length, deserves particular mention, seeing that it was the favorite route of the Carthaginians, and, after them, of the Arabs, when these "men of the East" invaded the fertile lands of eastern Sicily.

Down the valley of the Dittaino the railway continues to the station Assaro-Valguarnera, which takes its name from two towns, Assaro to the north, Valguarnera to the south, equally distant from the line. Assorus was an old Sikel town, near which, in times past, large quantities of alabaster were quarried. Through the territories of Assorum flows the Chrysas, which Cicero tells us "was regarded as a god whom the people most reverently worshipped. The Temple of Chrysas is in the fields near the road which goes from Assorum to Enna, and in it there is an image of Chrysas exquisitely made of marble." "Verres did not dare to beg that statue of the Assorians on account of the extraordinary sanctity of the temple, so he in-

trusts the business to Tlepolemus and Hiero, who, having prepared an armed body of men, come by night and break in the doors of the temple, but the keepers of the shrine and the guardians hear them in time, and a trumpet gives the signal of alarm well known to all the neighborhood, and men flock in from the country, and nothing was taken from the temple of Chrysas except one very diminutive image of brass."

Continuing onward towards Catania the train arrives at Agira, a town of about seven thousand people, occupying the ancient site of Agyrium, one of the chief settlements of the Siculi, and celebrated as the place where divine honors were first paid to Hercules, where Diodorus Siculus was born, and where St. Philip (who drove out the demons, as the early Christians called the pagan gods which haunted the fane of Hercules) established himself. He built a church to the Madonna on the site of the Temple of Hercules. In the crypt of Real Batia, a church in the lower part of the town, is the tomb of St. Philip, supposed to contain those remaining portions of his body that had not already been distributed as relics to other shrines, and near this church is a cave once occupied as a cell by the hermit-apostle.

To the east of Agira is Catenanuova, the station for Centuripe, formerly called Centorbi, an ancient hill city of the Sicels. The great rock on which the city stands rises abruptly from the plain, five miles to the north of the railway, but the houses of Centuripe do not stand upon a table or plateau, as they seem to do when the traveller beholds the town from the window of the train, but are placed on a group of peaks and ridges formed by deep ravines and gorges in the rock. The

distant city was transfigured by sunset, its white houses, suffused with the pink glow of the clouds, presented a charming contrast to the rich copper color of the rock, and, far beyond the city, towering ten thousand feet to heaven, stood Ætna, the snows upon its peak glistening white, while lower down they reflected the ruddy and golden hues of the sky. High above the plain on the slopes of "the pillar of heaven, the nourisher of snow," we could see other golden cities—Adernò, ancient Hadranum, the city of the "Fire God," and Paternò, the Sicel town of Hybla Minor, overlooking the valley of the Simetus and many other villages and hamlets—glowing in all the tints of amethyst, onyx, and opal. It was a spectacle of unearthly splendor, one that will never fade from memory. The "Mountain of Mountains" dominated all space—in truth, it seemed to stand between earth and heaven, like Atlas holding the upper and lower worlds apart.

"Full half the height of heaven's blue  
That monstrous shadow overflow."

All day long, from far to the westward of Castrogiovanni, where we first caught sight of it, we had beheld the wonderful pyramid, snow-capped, uplifted so grandly above the earth, and we realized that, were there nothing else wonderful to see in all Sicily, the sight of Ætna was nobler, more inspiring, than the view of all the other mountains the traveller may behold in years of wandering.

## XXX

### CATANIA

**"Under Ætna"—La Via Lincoln—"Il Duomo"—Tomb of Bel-  
lini—Elephant of Heliodorus—Feast of Sant' Agata—  
"The World that is Never at Rest."**

THE situation of Catania at the northern base of the great volcano suggested to its Greek founders an appropriate name for their city. *Κάτα Αἴτνης*, contracted to *Katana*, signifies "Under Ætna," and the modern name, Catania, preserves the sound and sense of the old appellation. There is reason to believe that fourteen hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era there was a Sicel settlement on the site afterwards occupied by the Greek city, which was founded in the year 729 B.C. Be that as it may, *Katana* (or, as it is more commonly spelled by Greek authors, *Katane*), rapidly increased in size and importance, and for a time disputed with Syracuse for the primacy of the Siceliot cities. A century after its foundation the games held at *Katane* attracted to its palæstra the most celebrated of Greek athletes; Charondas gave his laws to the commune; Stesichorus, born at *Himera*, but a citizen of *Katane*, recited his verses in the theatre; scientific men came from Syracuse to study the phenomena of Ætna; Andronas charmed the multitude with his flute-playing and taught the art of pan-

tomime and dancing to music. The history of Katane during the days of Grecian rule in Trinacria is for the most part a story of wars waged against the Syracusans, who attempted to bring the smaller city in subjection under them. Katane was never held by the Carthaginians, but, in time, the all-conquering Romans governed there. Then, in the fulness of time, came the Saracens, who were in turn driven away by the Normans, when Benal-Themanh, Emir of Catania, betrayed his countrymen and gave aid and comfort to Count Roger during his first Sicilian expedition. The age of the Normans was a grand and splendid epoch in the history of Catania; King Roger built there a noble cathedral and brought back from Constantinople the relics of Sant' Agata, the protectress of the city, which had been carried away by George Maniaces. Nevertheless, there is little to interest the traveller in the city. True, there are to be seen in Catania the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre and of a Greek theatre; slight remains of baths, of a necropolis, of a nymphæum, an aqueduct, wells, a forum, a curia, a gymnasium, etc.; but our explorations of these antiquities satisfied us that little was to be gained by visiting excavations deep down under the lava that covers the wreck of ancient Katane.

During our stay in the city we found excellent accommodation at the Hôtel Grande Bretagne, situated on La Via Lincoln, the principal street of the city, called after the late President of the United States. This street, like La Via Lincoln in Palermo and other Sicilian cities, was named by the Marquis di Rudini, now (1897) Prime-minister of King Humbert, a statesman who not alone in the honor he has paid to the

Great Emancipator, but in many other ways, has demonstrated his feelings of friendliness for the United States.

The Cathedral of Sant' Agata, built by King Roger in 1091 A.D., was badly wrecked by the earthquake of 1169, and in 1693 the remains of the original building were thrown down by the trembling of the earth. In the uninteresting modern edifice are the monuments of certain of the kings of Sicily, and other miscellaneous royalties too numerous to mention. In the apse is a chapel sacred to Sant' Agata, where is a beautiful altar containing the relics of that saint. A silver-gilt statue, covered with precious stones, contains the head of the holy martyr. The crown on the head of this image is said to be the gift of Richard Cœur de Lion, who passed through Catania on his way to the Holy Land; and on the finger of the saint is a ring, the present of the Queen of Italy, Margaritha di Savoia, who visited Catania in 1882. But more interesting than the tombs of dead and forgotten kings or the relics of saints is the monument erected, against the second pillar to the right of the nave as you enter the edifice, in memory of Vincenzo Bellini, the great composer, author of many well-known operas. Beneath a simple round arch is placed the sarcophagus containing the ashes of the gentle musician. Above this is a bas-relief of two angels bearing the soul of the artist to paradise. At the head of the sarcophagus stands the genius of music, her lyre, with broken strings, lying at her feet. On the front of the sarcophagus, instead of the customary lettered epitaph, are carved the first bars of the charming aria by the maestro:

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"THE ROCKS OF THE CYCLOPS"

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**"Ah! non credea mirarti,  
Si presto estinto fiore."**

Bellini, a native of Catania, died in Paris in 1876; ten years later his remains were carefully exhumed from a grave in Père Lachaise and transported to Catania, where they were re-entombed in the cathedral. A tablet marks the house in which Bellini was born, and in La Piazza Stesicoro there stands a statue of him surrounded by allegorical figures of his four great operas, "Norma," "Il Pirata," "La Sonnambula," and "I Puritani." A theatre, one of the finest in Italy, a public square, a villa enclosed in a beautiful garden, all bear his name. The Catanians, like other Sicilians (notably the Palermitans), are passionately fond of music, and therefore cherish the memory of their great fellow-citizen, as well as that of Pacini, whose works are now little known, in honor of whom, however, a prominent promenade of Catania has been named and a monument installed in one of the city squares.

In the middle of La Piazza del Duomo is the "Fountain of the Elephant," a large marble basin, in the centre of which stands a pedestal carved with representations of the river-gods Simeto and Amenano. Surmounting the pedestal is an elephant of lava, and on the back of the elephant stands an obelisk of sienite, with tusks of white marble. Certain local guides assert that the elephant is of prodigious antiquity, pretending that it was carved, by whom they do not state, years before the beginning of the Trojan War. It is of much later origin, and may be confidently attributed to Heliodorus, the magician, so called, who, when condemned to death by Constantine V., fled from Byzan-

tium through the air to Catania (as Dædalus flew from Crete to Sicania). Heliodorus "turned Jew, practised black art, and became a manufacturer of idols," to the great scandal of the Church and Bishop Leo, of Catania, himself a worker of wonders, and therefore surnamed Thaumaturgus. Heliodorus was laid by the heels by Bishop Leo and burned for heresy, either by being thrown into the crater of Ætna or in a furnace especially built for his cremation.

Of the Egyptian obelisk so strangely placed on the back of the lava elephant, Freeman surmises "that Agathocles had an Egyptian wife, Theoxena, who, it has been guessed, was the step-daughter of the first Ptolemy. Agathocles may have received an obelisk as part of her dowry, and he may have set it up at Catania. At any rate, the work of the Egyptian is there, mounted on what passes for the work of the convert to the creed of the Hebrew."

Although Catania is not as interesting nor as grand a city as Palermo, it is, nevertheless, a bright and busy place, modern in all its aspects, at least so far as its streets and buildings are concerned. But it is just in Catania that old manners and customs are most strictly preserved. The inhabitants, and not the most ignorant of them, are devoted to the worship of Sant' Agata, as we discovered on the day after our arrival in the city, the first day of the festa of the martyr-saint. In the evening the city was brilliantly illuminated, and a vast torchlight procession, composed of all classes of citizens, clerics and laymen, bearing the silver statue of the protectress of the city, advanced along the streets from church to church. About nine o'clock La Via Lincoln was almost as bright as it had

been at sunset, thousands upon thousands of candles were lighted, every window was illuminated, from all the balconies there flared countless torches, and on the roofs of the houses bengal-lights of all colors were burning fiercely, while the street, from curb to curb, blazed like a river of molten lava. Fireworks were "let off" in all the public squares and in front of the churches, bells were ringing incessantly, cannon were fired, and the spectators of all this glory kept up a mighty shouting, yelling, and whistling that defy description. After a long wait the people in the middle of the street made way for the procession, which advanced at a snail's pace. Leading the pageant there came several hundred citizens, robed in white (or, to be more exact, wearing what looked like white night-gowns), all bearing candles in their hands. Behind these there was borne the image of Sant' Agata on its pedestal, the latter, with the statue, weighing several tons. This enormous weight was carried forward no more than ten yards at a time, although borne aloft by three hundred or more bearers, all sorts and conditions of men, who placed their shoulders beneath two enormous beams, fifty or sixty feet in length, fastened to the sides of the pedestal. Not more than thirty feet were the three hundred men able to carry the shrine and image without stopping to rest, and when they were utterly exhausted their places were taken by other bearers, who marched before and behind the statue. For one whole day these white-robed citizens, of whom there must have been many hundreds, had been engaged in the great labor of carrying the saint from church to church, and for two days longer was the strange procession to find its

way about the streets, until all the principal churches in the city had been visited by the simulacrum of the saint.

By the courtesy of Professor Annibale Ricco, Astronomer Royal of the University of Catania, we were enabled to visit one of the most interesting sights of the city—namely, the Astronomical Observatory, and the “Terrestrial and Vulcanological Laboratory” connected with that institution. Professor Ricco invited us to visit the vaults, in which are to be seen geodynamic apparatus, instruments of precision which, during every second of time, record with marvellous accuracy the condition of the earth’s stability or instability. In the neighborhood of such a disturbing element as Mount *Ætna* the earth frequently trembles and is much disturbed.

When we had descended into the bowels of the earth, and stood in darkness while Professor Ricco was preparing to illuminate his subterranean workshop, we were unable to prevent our imagination from playing tricks upon our reason. We should not have been surprised had our “guide, philosopher, and friend” who had conducted us “*ad inferos*,” as the Cumean Sybil led faltering *Æneas* down into the kingdom of mighty Dis, suddenly turned to us and said, “Permit me to present you to my friend *Enceladus*, the owner of these sub-*Ætnean* premises.” Indeed, we should not have wondered greatly had he proposed to usher us into the smithy of *Vulcan* himself. When the door which shut out the upper world had been closed, we were awed by the silence, the utter stillness of the place, the listening blackness.

When lamps were lighted we discovered, in one of

a series of cave-like chambers (vaults that might have served for dungeons of the Inquisition), a well which, for aught we knew, dropped down to the realms of Aidoneus. Suspended in this pit were pendulums, and around it, on circular stone tables securely founded upon and in the native rock, were curious apparatus, more delicate in structure than the tiniest chronometer, all protected from the dustless, dead, calm air of the vaults by inverted glass globes and cases. So dainty were some of these instruments, so exactly and precisely adjusted were all their parts, that it had been possible to give them the necessary firm and immobile resting-place only by penetrating the strata of rock downward for one hundred feet, until absolute bed-rock had been reached. These little dials, recording-machines, pendulums, gauges, were mounted on a foundation as deeply laid and firmly built as the foundations of the piers of Brooklyn Bridge.

On one rock-table are eight of the most delicate seismographs of different systems; they record the faintest tremor of the earth occasioned by internal natural forces. So sensitive are some of these instruments that the heat of the body of an observer standing near them will cause the steel of which they are made to expand and thus disturb their nice adjustment. These seismographs are connected on an electrical circuit, which, being made or broken, sets in motion other instruments to record, on blackened paper prepared for the purpose, the duration, force, and direction of the oscillations of the earth. Of the eight seismographs we shall describe that one which seemed to us most curious: around a framework of brass, resembling a table-caster without bottles, was a

row of needles, small rods of steel, balanced so exactly on end that a shock a thousand times imperceptible (if we may use the term) to the most sensitive of human nerves will cause the needles to fall outward from the brass form, to be caught by a wire, and thus establish an electrical circuit. The electricity sets in motion a delicate machine which carries a sheet of paper ruled in minute squares, under the point of a suspended needle; the latter, by its swaying, measures the horizontal dimensions and direction of the impulse, and a clock-work arrangement records the duration of the seismic disturbance.

In one corner of the chamber is a pendulum seismograph of almost infinite precision and accuracy, that, surprising to relate, renders appreciable to the human vision (by means of microscopic lenses of high power) the slightest seismic disturbances. When Professor Ricco had illuminated the interior of a perpendicular tube, into which we looked through the eye-piece of a microscope of great power, we saw, reflected in a tiny mirror, a field of white light, across which there fell what appeared to be the semi-transparent shadow of the filmiest spider-web. This shadow was oscillating synchronously with the beating of our hearts, which, owing to the excitement under which we labored, as we gazed at the marvellous spectacle, seemed to thump against our ribs. The shadow moved back and forth at right angles to its length, in a slightly wavering, fluttering line, oscillating through a space equal to from ten to twenty times its diameter, in directions which, had we been looking at a map, would have given us northeast and southwest. We have to confess that we were strangely moved, awe-stricken, as

we peered into the microscope, and beheld on a little white diagram the almost imperceptible tell-tale film, which was set in motion and kept swinging to and fro by the trembling of the earth on which we live, move, and have our being. It was almost impossible to realize that we beheld an earthquake, and we turned to Professor Ricco and expressed our astonishment. He smiled and said, "The earth is never at rest ; it always trembles."

He then explained that the seismic waves, the effect of which we beheld in the microscope, were produced from northeast to southwest, and that the oscillations measured the five - thousandth part of an inch. Our heart-beats recorded the duration of an oscillation.

What food for imagination and wonder in the fact "The earth is never at rest ; it always trembles!"

## XXXI

### ÆTNA

Homer, Virgil, Dante — Ascent to Nicolosi — Monti Rossi—  
Eruption of 1886—"I Santarelli"—Veil of Sant' Agata.

It has been said that Vesuvius compared to Ætna is "a mere pocket volcano, for which space might be found upon the flank of the greater mountain." Seen from the mole enclosing the harbor of Catania, Ætna, ten thousand eight hundred feet in height, lifts itself in the foreground; its slopes begin in the streets of the city; its dome, limned against the northern sky, dominates land and sea.

Strange it is that Homer, who lays the scene of one of the adventures of Odysseus at its eastern base, does not refer to the volcanic nature of the "Mountain of the Cyclops." Virgil gives a graphic description of the volcano, "vomiting in the air frightful clouds of smoke, of bitumen, burning cinders, and balls of fire, which fly as high as to the stars"; and Ovid describes Typhœus (other writers maintain that it was Enceladus), "who lies imprisoned deep down beneath the vast island of Trinacria, his right hand placed under Pelorus, his left hand beneath Pachynus, his legs pressed down by Lilybæum, while Ætna bears down his head." Thus imprisoned the Titan "vomits flame from his raging mouth, struggling to throw

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off the earth, and to roll away cities and huge mountains from off his body." When the monster thus bestirs himself "the earth trembles, the King of the Shades is himself in dread lest it may be opened, the ground be parted with a wide chasm, and the day let in to affright the trembling ghosts."

It was Dante who first thought to destroy the popular belief in the supernatural nature of the phenomena of Mount Ætna, asserting that burning sulphur, not the struggles of a vast immortal, caused the convulsions of the mountain :

*"È la bella Trinacria, che caliga  
Tra Pachino e Peloro, sopra 'l golfo  
Che riceve da Euro maggior briga,  
Non per Tifeo, ma per nascente solfo."*

The earliest account of an eruption of Mount Ætna is given by Pindar, who describes the catastrophe of 476 B.C., and we have the stories of more than eighty eruptions which have taken place since Pindar's day, down to the year 1892, when the volcano last threatened to destroy certain of the towns lying on its sides and at its feet. The Greeks named the volcano *Αἷτνη*, "The Burning Mountain"; the Saracens called it Gibel-Huthmet, Hunthamet, or Djebel Nar, "The Mountain of Fire." The Normans knew it by the name Monte Gibello, repeating the word for mountain in Latin and Arabic, ultimately softened and contracted to Mongibello. Catanians and other Sicilians who live within sight of Ætna ordinarily speak of it as "La Montagna."

Early in the morning of a June-like day in February we left our albergo in La Via Lincoln, turned

into La Strada Stesicoro Etnea, and there before us, in the north, stood Ætna, closing the vista formed by the row of buildings on each side of the thoroughfare. From the end of the strada we ascended through orange and olive groves, orchards, and gardens, crossing La Regione Piedemontana, the lowest of the three zones that girdle Mongibello, a wonderfully fertile district, not surpassed in luxuriance even by Il Conco d' Oro of Palermo. The fecundity of the soil is due to the disintegration of lava, which, having overflowed the land many centuries ago, has been turned to dust, and now enriches the earth, compensating in some measure for the misery occasioned to forgotten generations of mankind. We passed many villas, the country-seats of the Catanian gentry, charming spots in which to spend the hot weather in the midst of gardens, in a delightful country overlooking the city, with grand views of the sea and plain. As we mount higher and higher the panorama increased in grandeur and interest, the air became more exhilarating; the breezes, nevertheless, were soft and balmy, bringing with them the freshness of the sea, the odor of almond blossoms. From Torre del Grifo, a pleasant hamlet seated nearly one thousand eight hundred feet above sea-level, at the lower edge of "la regione boschiva," the wooded belt, the middle zone of Ætna, we traverse the burned and barren surface of the lava streams of 1537, and see, to the right of us, the stream of 1408, and to the left the great river of 1669. A most desolate-looking country, black and fire-worn, stripped of greenery, except patches of *genesta Ætnensis* and of cacti here and there, showing their weird, distorted shapes against

the masses of lava. The genesta (broom-brush), which is indigenous to the forest belt, is the first plant to grow upon the lava beds, but it does not make its appearance until many centuries after volcanic eruptions have taken place, not until the lava has been slowly disintegrated and mixed with the dust of vegetable mould deposited by the winds. A district covered by a lava flow is lost to agriculture for not less than three centuries. The road winds wearily across these burned places, and long before Nicolosi was reached we tired of the sight of the dreary wasteland, the stunted plants, and were tormented, moreover, by dense clouds of dust that rose upon every breeze, eddying and circling along the mountain-side.

About two hours after our departure from Catania we arrived at the town of Nicolosi, a small village with two thousand seven hundred inhabitants, lying two thousand three hundred feet above the level of the sea. All its houses are of one story and lightly constructed, many of them with wooden roofs, for the men who build them live in constant dread of earthquakes, fearing to erect substantial walls that may be thrown down at any time, to crush out the lives of their wives and little ones. Nicolosi boasts of two hotels, but we saw no dwelling in which we should care to pass a night. There is nothing to interest one in the place. The town owes its local celebrity to the fact that travellers make it their point of departure when starting on excursions to the summit of Ætna. It stands in the channel down which burning torrents have flowed from the heights towards Catania, has often been destroyed by earthquakes, and from time to time partly buried under streams of lava.

In the one public room of the Hôtel dell' *Ætna*, while awaiting a guide for whom a message had been sent to conduct us to Monti Rossi, we amused ourselves by looking over the pages of the old registers, in which are recorded the names of many travellers who have made the ascent to the summit during the past sixty years. In the first volume of the series, on one of the first pages, we found a name that is always mentioned with reverence by Italians, who know by heart the story of the "Regeneration" of their native land, a name dear to liberty-loving people all the world over — W. E. Gladstone. The signature was penned in 1838, when the writer, then in the full vigor of youth, doubtless looked upon the ascent of *Ætna* as a pleasant jaunt to be taken merrily by a stalwart climber, sound in body and possessed of a steady head. Of all the many accounts we have read of the ascent to the summit of the volcano, Mr. Gladstone's is by far the most graphic and interesting.

Upon the arrival of our guide, a good-natured fellow, Carmelo by name, we proceeded along the main street of Nicolosi for two or three hundred yards, and came to the treeless, houseless mountain-side. A strong breeze raised dense clouds of pulverized lava, which pricked our faces and almost blinded us as we made our way across heaps of ashes and scorixæ, in which we sank ankle-deep at every step. All the country is one vast ash-pit. There is hardly a square yard of grass growing anywhere within a half-mile of the town, and only a few bushes of *genesta*, and perhaps a dozen stunted trees tossing their misshapen branches in the air.

The twin cones of Monti Rossi are more than one thousand feet in height, and consist of fine cinders, such as are drawn from the fire-boxes of locomotive engines. With little aid from imagination one may readily fancy that these "montagnuoli" are the ash-heaps of Vulcan's smithy. From the top of Monti Rossi a truly stupendous panorama is to be obtained. Far above towers the summit of Ætna, rising from "la regione deserta," the highest of the three Ætnean zones, seemingly as lofty as it appeared to us at Catania, although we had ascended more than one-quarter of the distance from base to summit. Below, at the foot of the mountain, lies Catania, between the sea and the vast plain; beyond the latter, miles and miles away, rises a blue line of hills, a spur of the central mountains of Sicily projected southwesterly towards Cape Pachynus. From the base of Ætna the eastern shore of Sicily extends southward in a succession of curving beaches to where, almost beyond sight, a long neck of lowland stretches into the Ionian Sea, and in the misty distance we behold the mirage of the hills of Hybla, between which and the sea lies the ancient city of Syracuse.

To the east of Monti Rossi the lava flow of 1669 can be traced from far up the side of Ætna down the slope to Catania, an elongated, irregular claw, which grasps the earth like the tentacle of an unimaginably huge polypus. The dead and lustreless lava is, however, margined round by intensely green plantations that were not overwhelmed by the stream of liquid fire. Beyond the stream of 1669 we can trace the flow of 1886 from its source, the crater of Monte Gemellaro, four thousand seven hundred feet above

the level of the sea, down to Gli Altarelli di Nicolosi, a distance of about four miles.

Shortly before noon of May 18, 1886, an immense column of smoke, followed by cinders and stones, was ejected from the crater at the summit of *Ætna*. On the morning of the 19th severe shocks of earthquake were felt, and about four miles above Nicolosi a new crater was formed in the mountain-side, from which arose condensing vapors, flames, and incandescent stones. From the base of this crater there flowed a mass of lava four hundred feet in width, which descended in the direction of Nicolosi with an initial velocity of fifty or sixty yards per hour. The heavens were obscured by clouds of smoke, the sun was turned to blood. The people of Catania, and of all the cities on the south side of *Ætna*, were driven frantic with terror, and in all the churches services continued without interruption night and day. Thousands of people formed processions, headed by priests who bore the sacred relics of St. Anthony of Padua and San Antonio "I Santarelli," "The Little Saints of Nicolosi." These patron saints of the country-side are the Christian successors of Emantius and Criton, or Amphinomus and Anapius, "The Pious Brethren," of whom the legend is told (by Pausanius, Strabo, Claudian, Ausonius, and others) how, during an eruption, they carried off their father and mother on their backs, and how the lava torrents turned aside at the "Pious Field" to leave them unhurt. The relics of I Santarelli were placed in "Gli Altarelli di Nicolosi," a small chapel on the mountain-side, a few rods above the town, and the lava, which during the first days of the eruption travelled at the rate of fifty or sixty

yards an hour, decreased its rate of daily advance to twenty, to ten, to five, to two yards per hour. The flow of the molten mass was nevertheless irresistible; where in the morning had been green fields and vineyards, or plantations of "fichi d' India," at noon or in the evening were masses of smoking, semi-liquid lava, the flow of which no power at command of mankind could arrest.

I Santarelli having been able to accomplish nothing against the lava which constantly advanced ("avendo fatto fiasco contro la lava che incalzava sempre"), the people of Nicolosi in their desperation sent messengers to Catania to beseech the archbishop to ascend the mountain and "exhibit" the veil of Sant' Agata ("il solo talismano che poteva salvare Nicolosi da ulteriore rovina"), the only talisman that could save Nicolosi from utter ruin. The archbishop, consenting to make the experiment, travelled up the mountain in his state carriage drawn by two white horses, taking with him two priests who bore a reliquary containing the remnant of the veil of the virgin Agatha, the holy Christian martyr. It was hoped that the white linen fragment preserved in the ark of the saint in the cathedral of Catania would reproduce the miracle of 1669. Reaching Nicolosi, the archbishop, attended by his priests, and followed at a distance by a crowd of hysterical people, advanced to Gli Altarelli, bearing the sacred veil. On the 24th of May, six days after the beginning of the eruption, the lava, advancing at the rate of about four hundred yards a day, threatened to overwhelm the chapel; on the 27th of May it almost touched the walls of Gli Altarelli. After the exhibition of the veil, and, as the people of Nicolosi believe,

as a result of the exhibition, the stream of lava divided, one branch precipitating itself into a valley to the east, the other, continuing down the side of *Ætna* to the west of Gli Altarelli, advanced in a direct line to Nicolosi. Then, although the images of I Santarelli were exposed from the roofs of the churches in Nicolosi, although the veil of Sant' Agata had been daily borne in procession in front of the advancing lava; although in the churches prayers and petitions were ceaselessly offered up, the people, losing faith in the virtue of the veil of Sant' Agata, and in the power of St. Anthony and San Antonio, abandoned all hope.

On the 31st of May the order was given to abandon Nicolosi; a cordon of troops was formed to prevent the inhabitants who had already deserted their houses from returning to save what little property they had left behind. The town had been stripped of everything of any value, even of its window-frames and the floors of the houses. At the moment of greatest terror the frenzied multitudes took heart of grace, for on the morning of the 2d of June the great crater at the summit of *Ætna* ceased to emit smoke and cinders, and there was to be seen rising into the clear Sicilian sky the light pennant of steam which usually hovers over the mountain-top when the volcano "banks" its fires. The lava had ceased flowing from Monte Gemellaro. It had stopped within three hundred and thirty yards of Nicolosi; it stood in a wall thirty feet high around Gli Altarelli. It is needless to say that the people of Nicolosi, the majority of the people of Catania, and, in fact, of Sicily at large, believe that the flow of lava was arrested by the miraculous intervention of Sant' Agata.

FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA. SYRACUSE



If the Sicilians are a superstitious people the reason for their credulity is not far to seek. According to a census taken in 1880, 85.72 per cent. of the people of the province of Catania are "analfabeti"\*—that is to say, of the 563,457 inhabitants, 482,983 are not only unable to read, but it is doubtful if any of them know one letter from another. These figures speak for themselves. "Sicily is not of to-day!" The manners and customs of the mass of the people are mediæval, their ignorance is that of the "dark ages," the ages of superstition.

We did not ascend higher upon Ætna than to the town of Nicolosi. The ascent of the mountain is never made in winter-time; indeed, we were informed that it is impossible to reach the summit of the volcano until after the middle of May, and sometimes not until early in July. The snow which covers the upper heights of the mountain is rarely frozen hard enough to afford secure footing for pedestrians, and during the early spring months the upper part of the mountain is covered with melting snows, through which it would be impossible for even the most thoroughly trained alpinist to make his way.

As the view from the summit of Ætna is one of the most magnificent prospects to be obtained anywhere in all the world, it was with great regret we learned of the impossibility of making the ascent when "la regione deserta" lies buried beneath vast banks and fields of snow. We felt that in some measure our Sicilian experiences must remain incomplete, the window in Aladdin's tower unfinished, until, at a

\* CHIARI. *Sicilia*, p. 386.

more convenient season, we should return to Nicolosi, thence to climb to the summit of Mongibello ("the Mountain of Mountains") and behold

"The charr'd, blacken'd, melancholy waste,  
Crowned by the awful peak, Ætna's great mouth,  
Round which the sullen vapour rolls."\*

\* MATTHEW ARNOLD.

## XXXII

### SYRACUSE

**"Fields of the Læstrygones"—Lago di Lentini—Leontinoi—Augusta—"The Town of Honey"—Promontory of Thapsus—First Impressions of Syracuse.**

FROM Catania the railway to Syracuse, leaving the sea-shore, runs inland to Biocca, traversing the Piano di Catania ("The Fields of the Læstrygones"), the anthropophagi, who, led on by their king, Antiphas, attacked Ulysses and his companions. The whole extent of this plain of Catania, also known as the Plain of Lentini, which Cicero tells us was "the most fertile part of Sicily," is to-day rich and productive, yielding abundant harvests. On the southern border of the Piano di Catania the train reaches the shore of Il Lago di Lentini, one of the "three wonders of Sicily" ("le tre meraviglie di Sicilia"), which, according to a local saying, are "un monte, un ponte, ed un fonte"—that is to say, Mount Ætna, the Bridge of Dædalus, and the Lake of Lentini, which, during the winter rains, has a circumference of about thirteen miles, shrinking to half that size in summer. It did not exist in ancient times, and it is to be hoped that at no distant day the marshy, unwholesome slough will be drained of its stagnant waters, which breed infection.

■ Eighteen miles from Catania we pass the town of Lentini, which stands on the site of Leontinoi, said to have been the capital city of Læstrygones, and inhabited by Siculi long before the coming of the Hellenes. Leontinoi was the birthplace of Gorgias the orator, the master of Alcibiades, but in the time of the Romans it had lost its importance and was, as Cicero tells us, "most miserable and lifeless." It fell into the hands of the Saracens in 847 A.D. In the Middle Ages it was often besieged, and finally was utterly destroyed by the earthquake in 1693.

From the shores of Il Lago di Lentini the railway approaches the sea-coast and passes Augusta, built in 1229 A.D. by the Emperor Frederick II., who peopled it from Centuripe, which "The Wonder of the World" razed to the ground to punish its inhabitants for their sedition. In 1286 William l'Estendard, one of the barons of Charles of Anjou, sacked the town, butchered its inhabitants, leaving not a living soul in the place, which for years remained desolate. During the War of the Vespers Augusta was taken and retaken by the contending armies, and in 1360, during the civil wars of the fourteenth century, it was demolished by the people of Catania and Syracuse. In 1551 it was burned by the Turks, and was finally utterly destroyed by the earthquake of 1639, when more than one-third of its inhabitants were buried beneath the ruins of their dwellings. At sea, in front of it, in 1676, Duquesne, the admiral of Louis XIV., defeated the Dutch fleet commanded by De Ruyter, who died of his wounds in the Castle of Syracuse, and since that time the town of Augusta has been of no importance to the world at large. The railway also

passes the almost undiscoverable ruins of Megara-Hyblæa, famed for its honey, which rivalled that of Hymettus in aromatic flavor. In the midst of a wide plain, between the mountain and the sea, near Priolo, we beheld a ruined monument, supposed to be the trophy erected by Marcellus to commemorate his capture of Syracuse in the year 212 B.C. From Priolo onward the railway skirts the Bay of Trogilus, where the fleet of Marcellus lay during the siege of Syracuse, crosses the rounded top of the peninsula of Magnisi (the ancient promontory of Thapsus), and, at fifty-four miles from Catania, reaches Syracuse, or, as the name is spelled by Sicilian cartographers, Siracusa.

As we stood on the platform of a newly erected railway station and beheld the commonplace modern town, it was difficult to realize that we had actually arrived at a city which, in ages past, rivalled Athens and Rome in size, in wealth, and in population. We were not impressed by the antiquity of anything we saw, nor did Syracuse in any way resemble any of the other Sicilian cities we had visited. It was not a hill city, like Monte San Giuliano, Girgenti, or Castrogiovanni; it was not a city lying at the base of a mountain, like Catania or Trapani, nor at the foot of cliffs, like Cefalù, nor on the margin of a vast and beautiful plain, like Palermo. The silver-gray city stands upon what is now a peninsula, once an island and formerly called Ortygia ("Quail Island"), surrounded by the deep-blue water of its two harbors. Syracuse has no acropolis, no long range of temples, no dome and spires, no towers and minarets. As seen from a distance it exhibits no architectural relics of Greek, Roman, Saracen, or Norman times. It does not lie in the midst

of grand and imposing scenery; low, encircling hills cut off all view of the inland.

Undoubtedly the first impression of Syracuse is disappointing, as is the first view of Rome when the traveller arrives at "The Eternal City" and gains his first idea of it from the piazza in front of the railway station. Nevertheless, it is impossible to behold Syracuse unmoved; it interests one strangely, appeals to the imagination, and awakens "Memory with all her busy train."

We behold Ortygia, and know it to be the site of the city founded by Archias near the fountain of Arethusa more than twenty-six centuries ago. We behold the harbor where the great sea-fight took place, when Greek met Greek in the tug-of-war so marvellously described by Thucydides; we recall the names of Gelon, of Hieron, of Dionysius, of Dion, of Timoleon, Archimedes, Marcellus, St. Paul, Maniaces, among others; and we have read the words of Cicero: "Syracuse is the greatest of the Greek cities and the most beautiful of all. It is so, O judges, by its situation, which is strongly fortified, and which is, on every side by which you can approach it, whether by sea or land, most beautiful to behold."

Whoever arrives at Syracuse, after visiting other places in Sicily—Catania, Palermo, the "hill towns," and the cities in the western part of the island—cannot fail to be struck by the fact that there is little resemblance between the people of Sicily at large and the people one sees in and about Syracuse. It is not in the slightest degree an exaggeration to say that the men, women, and children we saw about the railway station, the work-people employed there, the crowd

of idlers of all classes who had gathered to witness the arrival of the train, were as distinctly Greek in type, in cast of features, as are the people of Castrogiovanni or Caltanissetta, for instance—Saracen in type, in complexion, and countenance. At Catania and on *Ætna* we had noticed the predominating Italian, Calabrian type of face, in Cefalù we had discovered traces of Tunisian and Norman blood; but the inhabitants of Syracuse are distinctly not Italian, not Saracenic; and while we beheld many with blue eyes, light hair, and ruddy complexions, the majority of the people were of the Greek cast of features, not Albanian, as at Piana dei Greci, but if we may apply the term to a degenerate race, classic Greek. The Sicilians have been described as "a mixed race," the descendants of the Greeks and Saracens who have intermarried. No doubt this generalization is, to a certain extent, accurate as to the average Sicilian. At Palermo and in the central and western parts of the island the Saracenic characteristics prevail and are most noticeable; at Syracuse the distinctly Greek type is particularly to be remarked.

We did not tarry long at the station, but were promptly rescued from a mob of public porters and cab-drivers by the conductor of the omnibus of "Casa Politi," and immediately set out for the albergo which had been recommended to us as the most comfortable and best-ordered of the hotels of Syracuse. As we proceeded to the isthmus which connects the peninsula of Ortygia with the mainland, we asked ourselves many times, "What has become of ancient Syracuse? What has become of the five cities once included within the great walls?" Scarce-

ly one stone stands upon another of all the temples, dwellings, and public edifices of that part of the ancient city over the ruins of which we are making our way. Scarcely a mound or heap of rubbish serves to show where formerly stood that one of the five cities known as Neapolis. Even its ruins have perished, and the magnificent "new city," so often destroyed by its enemies, so often rebuilt by its inhabitants, to be destroyed and again rebuilt, has finally been reduced to dust and the dust swept into the sea or spread far and wide upon the plain by varying winds. The stone of which ancient Syracuse was built is soft and readily disintegrated; rain, sunshine, heat and cold, breeze and tempest, the sirocco, "the petulant, soft wind of the South," fret and corrode the masonry, crumbling it to fine powder; and the splendid edifices of Syracuse, its crown of towers, its superb monuments, the temples of its gods, all have vanished. Such is the impression that haunts the mind as one approaches the series of bridges and causeways that lead from the mainland to Ortygia, the site of Syracuse to-day, as it was the site of the town of Archias. The great city has become a small town again, having dwindled to its original limits and "sunk far below Palermo, Messina, Catania, in modern importance."\*

And the traveller may well ask, "Where is Syracuse?"—once the greatest of European cities, whose recorded history equals in bulk the recorded history of Athens, the champion of Europe against Africa, as Athens was the champion of Europe against Asia. If

\* E. A. FREEMAN. *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1879.

VENUS LANDOLINA. SYRACUSE

37



the Athenians successfully opposed the Persians, so did the Syracusans successfully oppose the Carthaginians; when Athens led the Hellenic hosts at Salamis, Syracuse stood in the front van of the Siceliot at the battle of Himera. It is impossible to estimate what would have been the condition of modern Europe had the Sicilian champions of civilization and philosophy been overwhelmed by the hordes of barbarism and Oriental mysticism.

Syracuse in Grecian times is said by various authorities to have contained, at different times, from five hundred thousand to a million, or even a million and a half, of inhabitants. The modern town has a population, according to the last census, of twenty-three thousand six hundred souls. For a thousand years Syracuse has played but an insignificant part in history. Its greatness had passed away long before it was burned to the ground by the Saracens, who, establishing their government at Palermo, slighted the ancient capital of the island; and as, during the days of the Saracens, Syracuse was neglected, so in the days of the Normans other cities—Palermo, Messina, Catania—were preferred before it. Therefore, when the traveller begins his study of the modern history of the town, he finds few facts of historical importance in any of the chronicles that have been written during the past ten centuries to engage his thought or awaken his interest. Indeed, since the year 878 A.D., when Syracuse, after a siege of nine months, was taken by the Saracens, its inhabitants put to the sword, and the city burned to the ground, there has been little to record concerning the once "famous city of cities," except that in the year 1085 A.D., Roger the Norman,

having driven out the Moslems, rescued the enslaved Christians, overturned the power of Islam, and set up anew the cross over the church in which St. Paul preached more than a millennium before, when "the great apostle to the Gentiles" tarried for three days at Syracuse on his journey from Melita to Rhegium and Puteoli.

## XXXIII

### ORTYGiA

**Fountain of Arethusa—Temple of Minerva—Temple of Diana  
—Castello Maniace—Great Harbor—Athenian Expedition  
—Its Destruction by Gylippus—Death of Nicias.**

OVID sings of the metamorphosis of Arethusa, but does not say that Alpheus followed Arethusa to Ortygia. The Greeks of Syracuse would have it so, although an older tradition than their myth tells how the Phœnicians, finding the fountain surrounded with willows, gave it the name of Alphaga, "the stream of the willows," or Arith, "the river." When the followers of Archias arrived in the island, which they called Ortygia, they fancied that the names Alphaga and Alpheus, similar in sound, were the same in meaning. In this way grew the romantic tale of the passion of the river-god Alpheus for the nymph Arethusa, and the descendants of Archias maintained that he had been commanded by the oracle of Delphi to cross the sea and found a colony of Corinthians "in that island where the River Alpheus mixes his waves with the fair Arethusa." This story was accepted by the Siceliots. Even Pausanias, who regards the story as a mere fable, does not dispute the fact that the two rivers, sinking into the earth, crossed beneath the sea, but he declares he is at a loss to explain the phenomenon

and the mystery of the oracle. In old Greece and in Sicily it was not unusual for rivers to disappear into the earth and arise again from the nether world ; therefore it required but little stretch of imagination for Greeks or Siceliot to give credence to the tale of Arethusa and Alpheus. And so it came about that a legend growing out of the local worship of Diana in Elis was carried to Sicily to explain a local wonder of Syracuse.

Leaving our albergo, which looks east over the Ionian Sea, we found our way, wandringly, across Ortygia, to the shore of the Great Harbor, where we discovered the historic spring flowing into a semicircular basin, surrounded by picturesque masses of papyrus. In these later years the fountain has been enclosed with marble walls, and thus preserved from defilement and profanation. The sacred waters, rising from an opening in the rock, form a goodly stream, which finds its way into the Great Harbor but a few yards distant. In like manner was the spring enclosed in the time of Cicero. He tells us that in the island of Ortygia " is a fountain of sweet water, the name of which is Arethusa, of incredible flow, very full of fish, which would be entirely overwhelmed by the sea were not its waters protected from the waves by a rampart and a wall of stone." Æons ago Arethusa and her nymphs haunted the fountain and bathed in the limpid water, which in these last times has been rescued from desecration, of which there was much need, seeing that for many years the spring was used as the public wash-place of the city.

In the heart of Ortygia, facing La Piazza del Duomo, and flanked by La Piazza Minerva, stands the

Cathedral of Syracuse, dedicated to Santa Maria del Piliero—"Saint Mary of the Pillar"—so called because the Christian church occupies the site of a Greek temple, the peristyle of which is incorporated with the cathedral walls. The temples of Syracuse do not stand revealed in all their ruined beauty, like the temples of Girgenti or the temple of Segesta—one has to search for them; nevertheless, there are three of these monuments of ancient times built in the days of the Commonwealth or of the Tyrants. Two of them are to be found in Ortygia, and one without the city, near the banks of the River Anapo. The temple (now the cathedral) was built in the sixth century B.C. By some authorities it is said to have been consecrated to Minerva, but Cicero, in his oration against Verres, states that the sumptuous Temple of Minerva, which was robbed of its costly treasures by the Roman prætor, stood at the southeastern extremity of the island. It is possible that the edifice in question was a shrine of Diana; the fact that it stands near the spring of Arethusa, "the nymph beloved of Dian," lends color to this supposition, although Freeman states that the temple was originally consecrated to Minerva. Be this as it may, certain it is that the early Christians, the descendants of the men who had listened to the preaching of the Apostle Paul, transformed the pagan temple into a Christian sanctuary by incorporating the columns and entablature with the enclosing walls, which were erected nearly a thousand years later than the foundation. The temple was one hundred and eighty feet in length and seventy-two in width. It had six fluted Doric columns in each portico, and fourteen on each side, but all of them are

now deeply embedded in the walls of the modern cathedral.

On the north side, next La Piazza Minerva, the columns support a portion of the ancient entablature, but the cornice and the guttæ are gone, and the triglyphs uphold Saracenic battlements. The latter bear witness to the fact that the pagan temple, having been transformed into a Christian church, was, in turn, changed into a mosque, and only after many years reconsecrated to the use of Christian worshippers. The interior contains little of interest to archæologists, few remains of Greek architecture; the walls of the cella were pierced with arches, and by filling up the spaces between the columns in the peristyle on each side with solid masonry Christian architects formed the nave and aisles of the metropolitan church.

Standing in the silence of the venerable sanctuary, it was wonderful to think that in this very place men have worshipped for more than twenty-four centuries. It may be that here Gelon, the two Hieros, Æschylus, Pindar, Gylippus, Dionysius, Plato, Timoleon, Agathocles, Archimedes, consulted the oracles of their gods. This same temple was more than four hundred years old when Marcellus forbade his soldiers to plunder it; from it Verres stole away innumerable priceless works of art; the Apostle Paul may have passed before its portico, accompanied perhaps by Marcian, whom Peter sent from Antioch to preach to the Syracusans. Here Belisarius may have worshipped, and Constantius. In 878 A.D. came the Saracens, who turned the Christian church into a mosque, from the roof of which, for two hundred years, muezzins called

"the faithful" to their prayers. Finally, in 1087, came the Normans, who restored the sanctuary to the keeping of Christian priests; and since then, down to the present day, within its walls, men and women have worshipped at the shrine of Mary the Madonna.

In Il Vico di San Paulo, near Il Duomo, are to be found the ruins of one other temple, consisting of a number of Doric columns standing half their height below the present level of the city streets. These relics are all that is left of a temple of Diana, or, as is more likely, of Apollo, for a badly mutilated inscription on the highest step of the stylobate indicates that the ancient fane was dedicated to the great god of the Siceliots. This structure was of unusual length, being flanked by at least nineteen, or perhaps twenty, columns on each side; it was seventy-one feet in width, but as part of the stylobate lies buried beneath the modern buildings it is impossible to determine the original dimensions.

In the Museum of Syracuse is a statue of Venus Anadyomene, discovered in 1804 by the Marchese Landolina in the Bonavia Gardens. The proportions of the statue are a little larger than life, and although the head and right arm are wanting, it is a most precious relic of Greek art. The shoulders, the chest, the back, the hips, are superbly modelled, and it would be difficult to imagine a figure more admirably posed and executed. The Venus of Syracuse, or Landolina, by some authorities said to be that Venus Callipyge which was modelled in Athens for Heliogabalus and by him presented to the citizens of Syracuse, is a perfect expression of mature womanly beauty of form; and, although not possessing the stately grace of the

Venus of Milo, is nevertheless truer to human nature. Less affected in pose than the Venus de' Medici, she appeals to the artistic sense by the unstudied charm of her attitude and the promise it gives of lissome freedom of action did she but choose to move.

Ortygia, towards its southern limits, narrows to a long point, on the end of which stands Castello Maniace, rebuilt in 1038 A.D. by George Maniaces, after he had reconquered Syracuse from the Saracens. Little has been written about this Byzantine soldier, the last catapan of the Greeks, who attempted, with the aid of the Normans under William of the Iron Arm, to restore Sicily to the sway of the Emperors of the East; but at Syracuse his memory is perpetuated in the name of a street leading from La Piazza del Duomo to the Castello, and by the Castello itself. The latter, however, does not exhibit the designs or method of construction employed by Byzantine builders of Maniaces' day. The oldest parts of the present buildings are of the thirteenth rather than of the eleventh century, and were doubtless erected during the time of the Emperor Frederick II. The castle stands as a monument to the name and fame of a great soldier; nor are the Syracusans of to-day unmindful of the man worthy to be named with Gelon and with Timoleon, "deliverer of the city." We examined with interest a marble gateway said to have been constructed by order of Maniaces, and above which he placed "two ancient Greek rams carved in bronze, that bleated with the wind." The bronzes have disappeared from the Gate of Maniaces; one only is known to be in existence, and that we had

"EAR OF DIONYSIUS," SYRACUSE



seen in the museum at Palermo. The great portal of the castle, a gloomy, frowning structure of unornamented arches, with a round tower on each side, shows the deep groove of an ancient portcullis and the fittings of a drawbridge, recalling the appurtenances of the mediæval castles of Germany and other Northern lands. The roof of the main tower of this castle commands the most comprehensive view of Ortygia and of the surrounding land and sea. Standing here we could readily imagine that in ancient times, in the days of Timoleon, who men said "was favored by the gods wherever he went"—Timoleon, the man worthiest of fame in the story of ancient Sicily, who having destroyed the power of the tyrants, and annihilated the army of the Carthaginians in the battle by the River Crimissus, raised Syracuse to the highest point of her greatness and grandeur; we could well believe that in those old days the Great Harbor of Syracuse presented a magnificent spectacle when viewed from the sea-walls of Ortygia. Upon its surface, which in the sunlight shines like a mirror of steel, floated hundreds upon hundreds of vessels, the navies of Syracuse, Sicilian ships, Greek, Phœnician, and Roman merchantmen, exhibiting a forest of masts, a network of cordage, sails of all colors, while countless small boats plied between the ships and the landing-places. In those days the water-front of Syracuse extended along the Great Harbor from the point of Ortygia for nearly three miles, following the bending shore to the mouth of the Anapo; so that it was well said that "the harbor did not surround the city, but the city the harbor." In the days of Timoleon the seaport Syracuse was equalled in importance and

wealth by no other city in the world, not even Athens or Corinth excepted, and its ancient harbor was the marvel of the nations. Protected from all the winds, it afforded safe anchorage for multitudes of vessels; around its shores were the famous arsenals, ship-yards, and careening-places, where thousands of slaves—carpenters, shipwrights, sail-makers—equipped the fleets built of timber cut from the sides of *Ætna* and the great central forests of Sicily, rigging them with cordage of hemp grown on the table-lands, and fitting them with sails of canvas woven of flax grown on the borders of the great plains of Catania and Noto.

Who can picture to the mind the tremendous activity and life of this city of Timoleon, a city said to have contained more than a million inhabitants, the metropolis of the Siceliots, or imagine the spectacle presented to the gaze of thousands of spectators upon that day sacred to Hercules, more than twenty-three centuries ago, when Greek met Greek in a naval combat which, if not the greatest and most momentous in its results of all sea-fights, has nevertheless been described as no other combat has ever been described, by the master historian of ancient and modern times.

Present on the scene of action, we aided imagination by studying the story of the engagement, as it is told by Thucydides, appreciating as never before the realism of his superb word-painting. The prose epic excites the imagination, stirs the heart, and conjures up mind-pictures of the throng of onlookers that lined the shore of the Great Harbor when the crews of two hundred ships of war contended for the mastery of the civilized world.

Think of that combat to the death! The gladiators—ninety thousand men, and such men!—Athenians and Spartans; the amphitheatre a land-locked bay, from the contracted limits of which there was no escape save through the narrow entrance between the rocks of Ortygia on the north and the reefs of Plemmyrium on the south; the spectators a million inhabitants of Syracuse, the city that had excited the envy and braved the wrath of Athens; more than forty thousand Ionian Greeks, in mad desperation, agonizing to reach the open sea; as many Dorian Greeks, daring all things, scorning death in their determination utterly to destroy their enemies there and on that very day.

It is true the Athenian ships outnumbered the Syracusan, but the latter had the advantage in the fact that almost all the shores of the harbor were open to them, while the Athenians were confined to the small space within the walls of their encampment. When the Athenian ships, in their last desperate effort to break the blockade, sailed straight for the bar at the mouth of the harbor,\* the Syracusans attacked them on all sides. The fight was desperate; the Athenians were broken in spirit, and, although there were nearly fifty thousand of them, every one of whom fought most courageously, they did not behave as men assured of victory, as did the soldiers under Gylippus.

“When the Athenians came up to the bar, in the first rush with which they charged they got the better of the ships posted at it, and endeavored to break the fastenings. Afterwards, when the Syracusans and

\* The Great Harbor was but three miles in diameter and the entrance but thirteen hundred yards in width

their allies bore down upon them from all quarters, the battle was going on no longer at the bar alone, but over all the harbor also; and an obstinate fight it was, such as no previous combat had been, for the greatest eagerness in the attack was exhibited by the seamen on both sides; indeed, every one, whatever the duty assigned to him, made every effort to the end that he might himself, in each case, appear the best man. After the battle had been obstinately disputed, and many ships and men destroyed on both sides, the Syracusans and their allies, having gained the victory, took up their wrecks and dead and sailed away to the city and erected a trophy. The Athenians, who in the extent of their present misery did not so much as think of the dead or the wreck of their ships, returned to their camp," to march thence to meet their doom on the banks of the Assinorus.

The Syracusans sullied their honor by the hideous cruelty which they practised on the remnant of the armies of Nicias and Demosthenes, whom they left to die of thirst and starvation in the quarries of Acradina. Nicias is to be pitied by all brave hearts. He opposed the unrighteous ambitions of his countrymen, but was too good a soldier, too patriotic an Athenian, to refuse to serve his native land when chosen to lead her army and navy in the field and upon the sea. When, finally, he was compelled to surrender his army he besought Gylippus to spare the lives of his soldiers, and passed to his death with sublime courage, "least of all Greeks of my time," exclaims Thucydides, "deserving to meet such misfortunes on account of his devoted attention to the practice of every virtue."

## XXXIV

### ACRADINA

**Names of Streets**—"The City of Wild Pear-Trees"—Santa Lucia — The Apostle Paul — La Latomia dei Cappuccini, "The Gethsemane of a Nation."

**MYTHOLOGY** and history, pagan and Christian biography, have been drawn upon to provide names for the streets and public places of Syracuse. The "Inner City," modern Syracuse, is traversed lengthwise by two irregular, crooked thoroughfares. La Via Dione (so named after the mother of Venus), beginning at "The Prisons," extends south to La Piazza Archimede, intersects Il Corso Vittorio Emanuele, beyond which its prolongation is called La Via Roma. Parallel to La Via Dione, La Via Cavour extends north and south, intersects Il Corso, crosses La Piazza del Duomo, beyond which it changes its name to La Via Maniace. La Via Gelone recalls the days of "the deliverer" of Syracuse, Gelon, "who enlarged the city at the expense of the older cities of Trinacria"; Il Passeggio Aretusa awakens fancies of the age of fable; La Via Principessa Margarita brings one's thoughts back to the present times; La Piazza Savonarola, La Via Garibaldi, and La Piazza Minerva give the traveller some slight hint of the changeful chronicles of Syracuse. These names, with many others of

no less historical import, recall the history of three thousand years, the annals of the town that sleeps where once the magnificent city stirred itself in the fulness of its life and power.

Ortygia offered an ideal site for a great commercial city, and from the days of its foundation by Archias and his band of adventurers Syracuse increased in size and population with marvellous rapidity. In seventy years the city was powerful enough to establish many colonies in Sicily, Acrai, Casmanai, Helorum, Netum, Enna, among others. When the metropolis, "the mother city of Ortygia," became too small to contain its inhabitants, it spread to the mainland and occupied the open space extending from the isthmus and the Two Harbors to the foot of the hills. In time all the seaward part of the promontory of Thapsus was covered by the dwellings and public edifices of a new precinct known as Acradina, so called from the wild pear-trees that grew among the rocks and crags. Later there were annexed two additional suburbs, Tyche on the northern angle, and Neapolis at the southern corner of Acradina; and, finally, when Syracuse attained its greatest dimensions, in the time of Dionysius I., the houses spread over Epipolæ, and a large part of the plateau of Thapsus was included within the city walls. At this time Syracuse embraced within its limits five great cities, Ortygia (known as the "Inner City"), Acradina, Tyche, Neapolis, and Epipolæ. The four last-named precincts, collectively known as the "Outer City," were enclosed by a continuous wall, 180 stadia, or 22 English miles, in circumference. Different authorities variously estimate the total population of Syracuse during the

fourth century B.C. at from eight hundred thousand to one million five hundred thousand souls. Great, indeed, must have been the city that drove the Carthaginians from its territories, destroyed the army and navy of Athens, and, for three years, successfully defied all assaults of the Romans under Marcellus.

From the day of its capture by the Romans, Syracuse declined in size, in wealth, in commercial and political importance, and, sinking to the level of a provincial town, gradually lost her social and political supremacy, and thereafter made no great figure in the history of the world. When the Saracens captured Syracuse, in 878 A.D., all its buildings were burned to the ground, and all its inhabitants were either put to the sword, or carried off into slavery by their conquerors. Since that time, now more than a thousand years ago, Acradina, Neapolis, Tyche, and Epipolæ have lain in ruin, and no attempt has ever been made to rebuild them. Only Ortygia, "the mother city," has preserved the name of Syracuse from death, but in the place of a city of a million or more inhabitants there remains to-day but a small town of a few thousand souls.

Beginning our explorations of Acradina, the second city of the Syracusan pentapolis, we crossed from Ortygia to the mainland, traversed the ancient necropolis, and arrived at an open circular space where three roads meet. Taking that one leading to the east, between the Little Harbor, the sea-shore, and the cliffs of Acradina, we passed a solitary column of red marble (all that remains above ground of what was probably the ancient Agora of Syracuse), and came to the so-called house of Agathocles, from which a narrow

lane leads north from the sea-shore to La Chiesa di Santa Lucia. This edifice was erected in the eleventh century on the spot where the patron saint of Syracuse is said to have been cruelly put to death. We entered the old church, which, in itself, is in no way noteworthy, and found a painting of the burial of Santa Lucia, by Caravaggio, the granite column to which she was bound during her flagellation, and a marble statue of her, said to be by Bernini. But none of all these things interested us; Caravaggio, if indeed the picture is by him, has not painted the maiden as beautiful or charming as we were willing to imagine her to have been, and it was difficult to persuade ourselves that Bernini's chisel had shaped the marble effigy, which certainly is a very mediocre work of art.

Not far from the Church of Santa Lucia stands the small sanctuary of San Giovanni. Of the original building, founded in 1182 A.D., but little remains, save a beautiful doorway, and over the west portal a Gothic wheel-window, finely carved. The church is not interesting in itself, but is nevertheless worthy of a visit, for the legend runs that what is now the crypt was, in very early Christian days, the Chapel of San Marcial, in which the Apostle Paul is alleged to have preached while he tarried "for three days at Syracuse." In this crypt are the remains of old frescos and an ancient tomb, alleged to be that of San Marcial; but of the visit of the great Apostle to the Gentiles there are no reminders nor evidences of any sort. It is, however, not at all improbable that St. Paul did, indeed, minister in this suburban chapel, where the fathers of the Church of Syracuse were wont to meet

GREEK THEATRE. SYRACUSE





in a solitary place outside of the city walls to worship the "strange, new God," the unknown God of whom the apostle preached to the men of Athens.

Returning to the Church of Santa Lucia, we continued along the shore, made a long ascent to the level plateau of Acradina, and at the southeastern angle of the cliffs found an old monastery of the Capuchins, near which are the remains of extensive walls recently excavated, probably the foundations of a Temple of Ceres. At the eastern side of the monastery we entered a gateway and followed a narrow cart-track scarped in the front of perpendicular cliffs, passing between a wall of natural limestone rock, all overgrown with vines, and a hedge-row of myrtle, laurel, roses, honeysuckle, aloes, and cacti. The road led down into a vast quarry a hundred feet in depth, at the bottom of which we found ourselves in an unimaginable, indescribable place, a vast subterranean labyrinth, a series of halls and galleries of narrow chambers and wide amphitheatres, of which the roofs seemed to have been removed by some mysterious agency, leaving the immeasurable excavations open to the air of heaven. Thus exposed to sunshine and to rain, the soil that now covers the bottom of the quarry has sent up bewildering varieties of greenery, and the naked cliffs are masked and draped with garlands of vines and masses of hanging shrubbery. In this sunken garden, enclosed by walls a hundred feet in height, all vegetation flourishes in wild luxuriance; no wind blows rudely to mar the fresh beauty of buds and blossoms, no sweeping gale prematurely strips the trees and shrubbery of their ripened fruit or mature leafage. Protected from tempests, nourished by vege-

table mould, orange and lemon trees stand straight and fair to see, pomegranates and all kinds of fruits ripen and drop from the unshaken branches; wild fig-trees grow in the fissures of the cliffs, old olives firmly root themselves amid fallen boulders, and ivy, wistaria, bougainvillea festoon the towering walls. Everywhere are roses and lentisk, lilacs—a world of beautiful flowers—and the acanthus, loved by the Corinthian ancestors of the men who quarried the living rock to build them houses and temples for the gods, grows rank under foot. And all this greenery is set off by a background of golden-gray limestone, white-shining in the sunlight; in the early morning and at evening tinted with the hues of Sicilian amber, “*dolce color d’ oriental berillo*.” Beautiful as it is to-day, this garden was the “Gethsemane of a nation.” In ancient times, when La Latomia was but an unsightly labyrinth, where no green thing grew on the naked, inhospitable rock, seven thousand Athenians, the remnant of the army of Nicias, were shut up in this horrid prison-house and left to die of their wounds, to fall a prey to disease. Tormented by thirst, by hunger, by heat, and by cold, poisoned by infection bred from the putrefying corpses of their companions, “the pupils of Socrates, the admirers of Euripides, the orators of Pnyx, the athletes of the Lyceum, lovers and comrades and philosophers died here like dogs, and the dames of Syracuse stood, doubtless, on those parapets above and looked upon them like wild beasts. How often, pining in those great, glaring pits, which were not then curtained by ivy nor canopied by the olive-trees, must the Athenians . . . have watched the dawn walk forth fire-footed from the edge of those bare

crag, or the stars glide from east to west across the narrow space of sky. How they must have envied the far flight of the hawk and swallow, sighing, 'O that I too had the wings of a bird.' The weary eyes, turned upward, found no change or respite, save that which the frost of night brought to the fire of day, and the burning sun to the pitiless, cold constellations." \*

Thucydides tells us that for seventy days the seven thousand Athenians lived in these pits, crowded together, where they were treated with great cruelty, receiving, each of them, daily, no more than a cotyle (about half an English pint) of water, and two of corn. In their torment the miserable captives suffered "all the other miseries which it was likely that men thrown into such a place would suffer, there being no misfortune nor agony that did not fall to their lot."

"Some of the captives are said to have won their release and freedom by repeating the verses of Euripides, at whose feet they flung themselves when they arrived at length in their native Athens."

A few were sold into slavery, but the majority died in their captivity, and at last there remained no remnant of the most splendid armament of Athens but heaps of corpses, putrefying bodies of dead men.

La Latomia dei Cappuccini is many acres in extent, and as we threaded the windings of the endless labyrinth it was easy to fancy that we wandered amid natural scenery, at the bottom of wooded chasms, overhung by cliffs and crags; it seemed impossible that such vast excavations could have been hewn from the living rock, even by a multitude of

\* J. A. SYMONDS. *Italian Sketches*.

toiling slaves. Unimaginably, indescribably beautiful is this sunken garden, which the men of to-day call La Selva—"the wild woods."

From the tangle of vegetation which covers the bottom of the quarries, great trees lift their branches sixty or eighty feet into the still air, but do not overtop the surrounding walls, which in many places have been undermined where enormous caves and chambers are hollowed in the rock. From the face of the cliffs vast masses of limestone, detached by time and earthquakes, have fallen and lie heaped in grand confusion, and many huge, fantastical shapes of rock rise island-like amid a sea of vegetation. In one of the grandest amphitheatres there stands up an enormous body of rock, in shape like the bow of a ship, more than ninety feet in height, and near this is a monument bearing this inscription:

A GIUSEPPI MAZZINI

Perchè tra noi sia durabilmente onorata  
La memoria d' un grande uomo,  
Pongono riverenti questa lapide,  
Gli operai della Società Archimede.

MDCCCLXXII.

Beautiful as it is in all its aspects and at all hours, this rock-walled paradise is, nevertheless, an unholy place, and many grim tales of murder and suicide haunt about its crags and pitfalls. In 1894, on New-year's Day—of all the days in the year—a little boy who had stolen three lire, and therefore dreaded punishment, dashed himself from the top of the cliffs to the rocks eighty or ninety feet below. Marvellous to relate, he was not killed, nor mortally wounded.

"Perhaps," said our Sicilian guide, "he called to Santa Lucia as he was falling. She has worked many miracles more difficult to perform than the saving of the life of a wicked boy." Nearby where the would-be suicide was found, maimed, but still alive, are the graves of five self-murderers, who were buried where they fell and lie in nameless sepulchres. Here, too, is the tomb of "Richard Reynall, Esq., British Vice-Consul to Syracuse, who departed this life September 16, 1838 A.D." It is said that the Englishman was killed in a duel by an antagonist, who, having provoked the quarrel, chose weapons in the use of which he himself was expert, but which the Englishman knew not how to wield. An inscription carved on the wall of rock marks the place of burial of "William K. Nicholson, Midshipman in the Navy of the United States of America, who was cut off from society in the bloom of life and health on the 18th day of September, 1804 A.D., *et anno ætatis* 18." We made diligent inquiries, hoping to learn something more of the history of our young countryman, who, dying in a foreign land, was laid to rest in this unconsecrated spot; but could find no record of his burial, and were obliged to be content with an explanation vouchsafed by our cicerone:

"Perhaps the young Americano was buried in La Latomia for the reason that, years ago, the bodies of heretics were not allowed to be interred in the public cemetery."

Not far from the entrance of La Latomia dei Cappuccini are the catacombs—"Grotte di San Giovanni"—said by different authorities to have been built by the Greeks, the Romans, or the Saracens. Little is

known of them except that they were used as burial-places, and that they extend for miles in all directions into the heart of the limestone rock of Acradina. Countless streets and galleries connect spacious circular and vaulted rooms surrounded by niches and alcoves in which the dead were entombed. It is said that there were more than three hundred and sixty of these circular apartments, and, according to tradition, the catacombs extended as far as to the River Sebetos, if not indeed as far as to Catania. If this incredible statement be true, the tunnelling of the modern world is as nothing compared to the long excavations of the catacombs of Syracuse.

The hill-sides above the Little Harbor, between the catacombs and Neapolis, are covered with the ruins of ancient tombs and niches cut in the rock to receive funereal urns, and from the heaps of débris rise the remains of two Doric pillars said to mark the tombs of Timoleon and Archimedes. There is no trustworthy authority for assuming that the two great men lie buried here; it is improbable that the so-called tomb of Archimedes is that monument which Cicero says he found "covered with brushwood and overrun with brambles, so that it was utterly unknown to the Syracusans, who even denied its existence," therefore there is little reason to believe that the Roman quæstor was justified in boasting that "the noblest city of Greece, which was once also the most learned, would have remained in ignorance of the monument of her most distinguished citizen, unless she had learned of it from a man of Arpinum." \*

\* *Tusculum Disputations*, V., 23.

## XXXV

### NEAPOLIS

New Syracuse—Roman Amphitheatre—Grand Altar of Hieron  
—La Latomia del Paradiso—The Ear of Dionysius—The  
Bath of Venus—Greek Theatre—Timoleon.

SO far our explorations had been confined within the limits of Acradina, the oldest of the four cities on the mainland. On the following day we again found our way to the open space on the isthmus connecting Ortygia with the necropolis; and, taking that road which leads directly north from the site of the ancient Agora, we began our explorations of Neapolis, the third of the five cities of the pentapolis. Crossing a meadow we pass by the remains of a Roman reservoir and come to the Roman amphitheatre built in the time of Augustus.

In general plan the amphitheatre of Syracuse is like all Roman amphitheatres. The arena, in the middle of which is a vast cistern, or "naumachia," is surrounded by a wall seven feet in height, with a cornice inscribed with the names of distinguished and privileged persons who once occupied the seats in the lower tiers. Beneath the first tier of sedilia is a vaulted corridor, from which eight gates open into the arena, to give entrance to wild beasts and gladiators. Of the seats on the eastern side, the two lower

tiers, which were hewn from the solid rock, only remain; those on the western side of the amphitheatre have almost entirely disappeared, while of the upper tiers hardly a vestige remains. This monumental edifice bears witness to the degradation of the Greek citizens of Syracuse, who, when they had been corrupted by the bloody spectacles in which the Romans delighted, no longer took pleasure in the dramas and comedies of the Greek poets. Syracuse, like her metropolis, Corinth, when both had fallen to the level of Roman provincial towns, became the rival of Capua in the magnificence of her gladiatorial shows. And we may well believe that the debased creatures who frequented the amphitheatre rarely visited the theatre where the plays of Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, and Aristophanes were performed, preferring to look upon the combats of man with man, or man with beast, taking delight in fouler and more cruel spectacles.

About one hundred yards beyond the amphitheatre is the Grand Altar of Hiero II., a vast platform (six hundred and forty-five feet in length and seventy-five feet in width) where, in the days of Syracusan magnificence, were annually offered four hundred and fifty oxen, to commemorate the expulsion of the tyrant Thrasybulus. An attempt has been made to rid the masonry of the amphitheatre and altar of the weeds and shrubbery, with which until recently both were overgrown. This care may serve to protect the masonry from further deterioration, but it certainly robs the ancient relics of much of their picturesque beauty, leaving them gaunt and gray in undisguised ruin.

Opposite the Grand Altar is the entrance to La



LATOMIA DEI CAPPUCCINI. SYRACUSI.

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Latomia del Paradiso, which, although not nearly so large as La Latomia dei Cappuccini, is in some respects more remarkable and picturesque. These quarries are many acres in extent, of irregular form, and on two sides the walls have been scarped, forming caverns, the roofs of which are upheld by enormous columns left standing for the purpose. Some of the hall-like excavations are a hundred feet in length, almost as wide, and thirty, forty, and even fifty or sixty feet in height. The largest of them is used to-day as a rope-walk, where we saw men and women in quaint, ragged costumes busily employed making cordage, using implements of the same old fashion that served the purpose of the ancients.

Adjoining La Latomia del Paradiso, or, rather, on its western border, is "L' Orecchio di Dionisio," an immense grotto fancied to resemble the human ear in form, which was cut, in the shape of the letter S, for 210 feet into the limestone rock and 74 feet in height, contracting from the 35 feet in width at its entrance to 15 feet at its inner extremity. The roof of the cavern is lofty and pointed, its walls are perfectly smooth, and, whether by accident or design, it possesses wonderful acoustic properties, and is haunted by a marvellous echo.

At one side of the entrance of the Ear of Dionysius grows ivy, of what age it is impossible to tell. The trunk of the vine is six inches in diameter, and its branches are like the boughs of a great ilex. A hundred feet or more they climb, to the top of the cliffs; then, creeping far and wide along the verge of the precipice, form a cornice and a frieze of living green over the arched portal of the cave.

Standing at the opening of the grotto, prompted by our guide, we repeated in chorus the formula by which neophytes summon the spirit which presides within the mysterious precincts—"Permesso, Dionisio!" And our words came back to us, not once, but countless times; were shouted back to us, spoken, whispered, shouted again and again, until we fancied we had awakened, not Dionysius, but a thousand imps that mocked at us. From the trumpet-like mouth of the cavern came a thousand words for every one that we had spoken. It was impossible to believe that two words had provoked so multitudinous a reply. When, finally, the last whisper had died away, our guide shouted the words, "Enter, you are welcome," and it seemed to us as if a regiment repeated the invitation. When a bow was drawn across a violin we could fancy that the stringed instruments of twenty orchestras were being tuned; when we clapped our hands there came back a round of applause. A single word provoked a hundred in reply, Dionysius, in his volubility, aping Xanthippe, wife of Socrates; and when we tore a piece of paper the sound was distinctly echoed, not once, but twice.

It is said that the famous tyrant of Syracuse constructed this cavern on the borders of the quarry used by him as a prison in which to confine those unfortunate beings who disagreed with him concerning matters of foreign or domestic politics and such members of his own household as disputed his authority. He devised the shape of it, and endowed it with its acoustic properties, so that he might hear the words of discontented captives and be forewarned if they conspired against him. In the roof, at the far end of the

grotto, is a little chamber, where Dionysius sat listening to the words and whispers of his captives. We ascended to this station of the eavesdropping tyrant, and although we were more than two hundred feet from our guide, who remained at the entrance of "The Ear," we were able to converse with him in ordinary tones, having no difficulty in understanding every word he uttered.

As a matter of fact, there is no authority for the statement that the grotto was constructed by Dionysius or in his time. This story is now said to have originated in the fertile imagination of the artist Caravaggio, who spent much time in Syracuse, where he was employed to decorate and embellish certain churches. Indeed, it is not possible to prove that the grotto was designedly constructed by any man, and we may reasonably assume that, when it had been made, for some purpose now unguessed, it was found to be possessed of a remarkable echo, just as the Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's, when completed, was found to possess acoustic properties not imagined by Sir Christopher Wren when he was building the dome of the cathedral.

Near La Latomia del Paradiso and L' Orecchio di Dionisio is La Latomia di Santa Venere, one of the smallest of the many ancient quarries of Syracuse. It is by far the most exquisitely beautiful of them all. Its depths have been transformed by Baron Targia into a delightful garden, where grow all kinds of fair and dainty plants and flowers in such bewildering variety that it would be impossible, even for a learned botanist, to make a catalogue of them, unless he devoted many days to that delightful occupation. We

visited this bower of Venus in February, and, even then, found it surpassingly beautiful; but when we entered it one April morning shortly after sunrise, and beheld it in all the glory of spring-time, we wondered if Venus had indeed deserted the enchanted place. Descending from the barren plateau, we arrived at the Bath of Venus, a small grotto at one side of La Latomia, at the bottom of a cliff, the face of which was hidden by vines and ferns. In front of the bath was a bed of roses, Beard of Jove (large flowers with magenta petals and golden calices), forget-me-nots, pinks, and carnations. Everywhere were orange and lemon trees in full bloom, and here and there appeared pomegranate blossoms of fiery crimson. Ivy draped all the upper walls, and flowering wistaria reaching from the branches of dead trees to the face of the cliff, climbed and climbed a hundred feet to the top. On each side wide-spreading bougainvillea, a mass of pink and peach-color, hung in garlands and wreaths, so that when we stood at the base of the cliff and looked upward it seemed as if we beheld a cataract of flowers, a Niagara of blossoms.

Over the opening to the Bath of Venus was this inscription:

"Come l' antica tradizione rimembra  
Qui Venere bagno le belle membra."

In the midst of La Latomia is a plantation of roses; to describe it as a bed of roses would give no idea of its size and tangled luxuriance, nor of the varieties of plants of which it was composed. There were in full bloom certainly thirty or forty specimens of wild and cultivated roses — white, pink, yellow, and crimson —

sweetbrier, delicate tea and moss roses, many standard and dwarf varieties; and in the centre an old olive-tree covered by climbing white roses produced the effect of a fountain of flowers. The gardener who accompanied us cut for us not a few choice buds, not a handful of roses, but literally a double armful, with long stems, each containing twenty or thirty buds and flowers. These he gave to la signora, notwithstanding the fact that a price had been set upon his wares by the noble owner of the grounds, as we knew from reading the following inscription displayed on an ornamental sign-board :

*"Quella rosa, O gentil visitatrice,  
Onde sospiri, a te toccar non lice.  
Per un bacio il padrone ama cambriarla.  
Questo è il suo prezzo, di se vuoi comprarla."*

Which may be freely translated as follows :

*"This rose, O gentle visitress, for which you sigh  
You must not touch;  
Its price? One kiss (if you will buy),  
Paid to its owner. Will you give so much?"*

To the eastward of the stone quarries, within the limits of ancient Neapolis, are the ruins of the Greek theatre erected in the fifth century B.C., the third largest structure of its kind, those of Miletus and Megalopolis only exceeding it in dimensions. The auditorium, about five hundred feet in diameter, contained seats in sixty-one tiers for the accommodation of twenty-four thousand auditors. Forty-six of the tiers are still visible, but the other fifteen, which were built above the solid rock out of which the lower tiers were

carved, have disappeared. The sedilia were arranged in nine cunei, intersected by a broad and a narrow "præcinctio," on the cornice of which are still to be read various Greek inscriptions, recording the names of the Olympian Jupiter, of King Hieron, Basilissas Philistides, Basilissas Nereides, etc. The auditorium is semicircular in shape, is cut into the face of the natural rock cliffs, and opens to the south, disclosing, now that the scena has disappeared, a wonderful view of the Great Harbor, the city on Ortygia, and the promontory of Plemmyrium.

While the date of the construction of the theatre is not certainly known, it is more than likely that it was completed, if not begun, by Gelon. Gelon was succeeded by his brother Hieron in the government of Syracuse, and the latter, the munificent patron of art and literature, invited Simonides, Bacchylides, Epicharmus, and Æschylus to reside at his court. Pindar also visited Hieron, and there can be but little doubt that from the stage of the new theatre the poets recited their odes and hymns. It is not improbable that Æschylus gave on this same stage representations of his tragedies for the delectation of Hieron and the Syracusans. But of all grand spectacles, of all gala days, that celebration was grandest, and that day most notable, when Syracuse, freed by the great endeavors of Timoleon, held high festival in his honor. We can imagine the theatre packed from chorus to the loftiest row of sedilia, until not a foot of standing-room was left unoccupied; the stage is set for a representation of a tragedy of Æschylus; but the thoughts of the Syracusans are not busy with the preparations for the enactment of a drama; their eyes

wander from the scena, they evidently expect some grand personage. At last, blind old Timoleon is led into the auditorium—Timoleon, the saviour of the city, the father of the people, the first and best-beloved citizen of the state, the man worthiest of fame, who thought it enough to deliver others, and who sought nothing for himself. Having been invited by “all Syracuse” to be present, he has been conveyed in a carriage from his country-seat to the theatre, followed by a dancing, singing, shouting multitude of people, who paid heroic honors to “The Deliverer.” We can imagine the enthusiasm of the audience as thousands upon thousands of free citizens leap to their feet to shout a tremendous, delirious welcome to the blind old man who is led to the seat of honor. And surely no people ever welcomed a grander old man than he, who, “like Cæsar, could say ‘Veni, vidi, vici,’ and who could further add ‘vixi.’” Timoleon, the most powerful man of his time, who, when he had restored his adopted country to freedom and prosperity, knew how to put away from him the temptation of absolute rule, preferring to dwell as a simple citizen among the people he had saved, passing his honored old age on his well-tilled farm, beloved, revered by all his countrymen.

## XXXVI

### EPIPOLÆ AND THE ANAPO

Castle of Euryalos—Athenian Siege of Syracuse—Capture of the City by Marcellus—Up the Anapo—Papyrus—Fountain of Cyane—Modern Naiads.

IT is an interesting journey and a long one from the Castle of Maniaces, at the southern extremity of Ortygia, to Fort Euryalos, from one end of ancient Syracuse to the other, a distance of more than four miles by the footpath along the southern edge of Epipolæ, or more than five and a half miles by the carriage road which winds along at the base of the cliffs that rise above the valley of the Anapo.

Fort Euryalos stands at the western extremity of Epipolæ, at an angle of the walls of Dionysius I., who employed sixty thousand men and six thousand teams of oxen for two months in building the wonderful line of fortifications with which he surrounded the five cities. It is true that before the days of Dionysius there was a fort on Epipolæ; the Athenians under Nicias occupied it when they first landed on Thapsus, but Dionysius greatly enlarged and strengthened it, excavating numerous passages, all of which communicated with a great, central, open court, where the garrison could resort when driven from the outworks. There are also countless galleries hewn in the solid rock,

RIVER ANAPO (WITH PAFYRUS)



through which the soldiers found their way to outlying towers and parapets, and there are still to be seen stations where catapults and other engines of offensive and defensive warfare were mounted on the walls. The fortress is surrounded by a dry moat or fosse, from which diverge many interconnected, subterranean passages, which were used as exits for infantry and cavalry to the plain of Thapsus.

When the army commanded by Nicias began the investment of Syracuse; Euryalos was an isolated fort; having taken it by surprise, the Athenians intrenched themselves securely within it, before undertaking the construction of that part of the military wall which extended from the Great Harbor to the heights of Epipolæ, where they built an outpost known as "The Circle." The Syracusans did not vigorously oppose the erection of the Athenian wall from the Great Harbor to the Circle; but, after the arrival of Gylippus, when Nicias began to build from the Circle down to the Bay of Trogilus, the Spartan commander prevented him, by building outward from Acradina a counter-wall, which, extending along the ridge of Epipolæ, intersected the proposed line of the Athenian wall, and continued onward in the direction of Fort Euryalos. Traces of the wall and counter-wall are discoverable in various places, and there are extensive remains of the walls of Dionysius divergent from Euryalos and cresting the cliffs of Epipolæ. Of wonderful extent were the fortifications erected from time to time by different builders on the triangular plateau of Epipolæ, and the ruins of them confirm all statements that have been made concerning their solidity and strength.

When Marcellus besieged the city he was held at bay for nearly three years by the machinations of Archimedes and the desperate courage of the Syracusans; but Marcellus was a persistent man and he waited patiently for the opportunity which presently came to him. During the celebration of a three days' feast of Diana, the great goddess of the Syracusans, the people of the pentapolis, thinking themselves secure within their mighty walls, gave themselves over, after the manner of Belshazzar and the Babylonians, to revelry and drunkenness. The Romans did not seem to be pressing the siege; the engines of Archimedes were idle. This was Marcellus's opportunity. The Roman soldiers, having found a weak spot in the defence, scaled the wall and slaughtered the drunken guards where they slept. Then Roman trumpets sounded the charge, and the warriors of Marcellus, rushing in, took possession of the whole open ground of Epipolæ.

The story runs that when the Roman general entered Syracuse in triumph, he sent for Archimedes, who was engaged in the solution of a mathematical problem. The sage asked to be allowed to finish his work before obeying the command of the Roman general. A soldier, misunderstanding his words, drew his sword and killed him. So perished *mathematicorum princeps* — *supremum Siciliæ ornamentum*; so passed also the glory of ancient Syracuse, which had been for centuries an independent, a ruling city, the greatest city of Sicily and Europe. The sceptre departed from her, and for more than a thousand years the "City of Cities" remained a provincial town under the dominion of mighty Rome.

There is a wonderful view from the Castle of Euryalos. From its ruined battlements the traveller may study to advantage the topography of Syracúse and the surrounding country. To the east the foreground is occupied by the barren, ruin-heaped table-land of Epipolæ, the entire surface of which has been cut and carved, stripped of the square blocks used in building the walls and fortifications of the five cities. The serrated lines of cliffs diverging from Euryalos to the east and southeast form a right-angle triangle, of which the cliffs of Acradina are the base. On the northeastern corner of the plateau adjoining Acradina are the ruins of Tyche, and on the southwestern corner (also adjoining Acradina) are the remains of Neapolis. Beyond the cliffs of Acradina extends the blue expanse of the Ionian Sea. Sixty-five miles in the north, across the Bay of Thapsus, beyond the promontory of San Croce and the Bay of Catania, Ætna uplifts its pyramid, and to the right of the Mountain of Mountains the coast of Sicily extends northeastwardly along the Strait of Messina in a succession of promontories, the nearest of which, Mount Taurus, shows in front of the dim outline of hills that look down upon Scylla and Charybdis. In the northeast, across the Ionian Sea, stand the front ranks of the Aspromonte Mountains, and behind them, at the verge of vision, showing faintly like the shadow of clouds, there are suggestions of the sky-line of the Apennines of Calabria. To the west, beyond the Valley of Anapo, rise the hills about Floridia and the foot-hills of the Sierras of Erei, which extend to Enna, in the heart of Sicily. Down in the valley of the Anapo, on the shore of the Great Harbor, the site of

the Athenian camp is discoverable, and the eye ranging over the round expanse of water rests on Ortygia and explores the shore of the promontory of Plemmyrium beyond. On the southwest rise the hills whence flows the River Asinarus, on the banks of which Nicias and his seven thousand laid down their arms; and far beyond these in blue silhouette appears the misty outline of Cape Passaro, lifting its broad head and flanks above the purple African Sea. The whole eastern coast of Sicily from Charybdis, over against Scylla, to Pachynus—a distance of one hundred and ten miles—is in full view from our outlook on the ruins of Euryalos, and sight and imagination never weary of the contemplation of so magnificent a panorama.

One delicious morning we took passage in a barca navigated by four rowers and a steersman, crossed the Great Harbor, passing close by the site of the Athenian camp, now a marshy, reed-grown expanse of shore, and, avoiding with difficulty the sand-pits and shallow waters at its mouth, entered the River Anapo, to begin our explorations of the most celebrated of Sicilian streams.

The Anapo rises in the Eraian Mountains, and, after flowing for twenty-five miles, at first through picturesque ravines, then across the plain to which it gives its name, empties into the Great Harbor of Syracuse. We experienced great difficulty in ascending the stream, owing to the narrowness and shallowness of its bed, but the February rains had raised the water in the channel, and we were able to pole our barca to Ponte Grande, where the road to Noto crosses the Anapo. Passing under this modern structure, we proceeded for half a mile, and came to the remains of an

ancient bridge, where the stream is crossed by La Via Helorina. Here the Athenians, in their first skirmish with the soldiers of Gylippus, drove back their enemies, and, fording the river, continued their retreat to the hills of Floridia. At this point we left our boat, and after a walk of ten minutes ascended a knoll fifty or sixty feet above the sea, on which we found the ruins of the Temple of the Olympian Jupiter. Of this grand edifice—first mentioned in history in 493 B.C., when Hippocrates, the tyrant of Gela, pitched his camp near it when he came to besiege Syracuse—but little remains. Two badly mutilated, broken columns are all the relics of the shrine which Gelon enriched with a mantle of gold captured from the Carthaginians at Himera. This same mantle was worn by the god whose statue Cicero describes as one of the three most beautiful in the world. Dionysius robbed the Olympian Jupiter of his cloak, saying that as it was “too cold for winter and too heavy for summer use, the god would be more comfortable during both seasons in a cloak of wool.”

We remained long, haunting the old ruins, wondering at the utter desolation of the plain, so often the camping-ground of armies, admiring the charming view of distant Syracuse, the living town on Ortygia, and the four dead cities on the heights. Returning to our boat, we resumed our explorations, following the winding channel through the Palude Pantano (Palus Lysimaleia), the pestilential malaria of which has destroyed multitudes of warriors who, in times past, besieged Syracuse. A mile from the mouth of “the great stream,” as Theocritus calls the water-course that to-day deserves no grander name than

brook, we came to where the clear waters of Cyane mingle with the tawny floods of the Anapo, and, leaving the latter, ascended the former stream, now known as Fiume Pisma. The Cyane is a wayward water-course, which wanders to and fro, lingering long amid meadows and orchards. Its banks are beautified by masses of papyrus, "the plant of the Nile," which only along the margin of this stream and by the fountain of Arethusa in Ortygia is still to be found anywhere in Europe growing in its natural beauty.

We advanced but slowly because of the sudden turns and wanderings of the river, and our progress was impeded by masses of floating ranunculuses and water-cresses, which choked the channel. Nevertheless, rowing, poling, sometimes towing the boat, as they waded the shallow places, our boatmen won their way up-stream, and, where the tangle of papyrus rendered it impossible to use a tow-line, boatmen and passengers, grasping the tough reeds, slowly but surely advanced against the current. Behind the papyrus which overhangs the bank are dense plantations of cane, reeds, and flags, alternating with open meadow-lands, on the margin of which red Sicilian cattle stood knee-deep in water to gaze curiously at us as we passed. And where the land had been drained are wheat-fields, vineyards, orchards, and groves of ancient olive-trees, planted in the days of the Saracens.

The banks of the Cyane are most picturesque and finely colored; the green papyrus stalks, crowned with golden tassels, show against a background of yellow cane. Almond-trees fill the air with the sweetness of their blossoms, and the green turf is covered with a snow of petals. Everywhere there are flowers, es-

pecially such as flourish by sweet waters and love the borders of clear, flowing streams. The waves of the Cyane are wonderfully clear and transparent, so pellucid that when we looked down into them it was impossible to guess the depth of the stream, which seemed to possess the mysterious power of magnifying all objects immersed in it; the deepest pools, reflecting heaven, shone with the blue of the Alpine gentian. The great charm of the river, however, is the papyrus, the sight of which carried our thoughts back to the days of King Hieron II., "the ally of Rome, the friend of the Egyptian Ptolemies," who, to please his dearly beloved wife, Philistis (whose beautiful profile is to be seen on old coins of Syracuse), brought the parent plants from the River Nile, or, as it is not improbable, received them as a gift from one of the Ptolemies to embellish a garden for his queen on the banks of the Cyane.

There is no vestige of the bowers and ornaments of the garden of Philistis; four of the five cities of Syracuse lie in ruin; the ruins themselves have perished; the gods have forsaken the temples where Hieron and his queen worshipped, but the Cyane still flows onward to the sea, and, uplifted in the morning light, reflected in the blue depths of the stream, we beheld the Egyptian plant, the gift of a Ptolemy to a Greek king, flourishing as in the beginning of history, when it grew on the banks of the ancient Nile.\*

When our passage was barred by the densest growths we had yet beheld, we forced our boat on-

\* There is no papyrus of natural growth to be found, to day, in Egypt. The plants to be seen growing in the fountains of Cairo were transplanted from the Botanical Gardens of Amsterdam, in Holland.

ward beneath bending masses of papyrus that touched crowns across the stream, and found ourselves floating on a beautiful circular fountain, named in honor of the nymph who, under the form of a lovely maiden, was wooed and wedded by the river-god Anapus. We seemed to float in the air; the pool was so wonderfully transparent we could behold fish swimming in its depths, and pebbles lying at its bottom, thirty or forty feet below. We were enchanted by the loveliness of La Pisma, "the dark-blue spring, the mirror of Cyane," as Ovid tells us, of all Sicilian nymphs most beautiful, who, when Pluto was carrying off Proserpine, attempted to arrest the flight of cruel Dis, and was changed by him into a fountain, which sprang from an opening to the infernal world. In ancient times the Syracusans held an annual festival in honor of Persephone on the banks of this same fountain, and near it are the ruins said to mark the place where anciently there was a shrine to Cyane. Cicero tells us that in this pool bulls were immersed before being sacrificed in honor of Hercules, who, to refresh himself, bathed in the clear water as he passed by driving the herds of Geryones. One of the marvels of the fountain is the deep azure of its waters; not even in the grotto of Capri are the waves more intensely blue.

Suddenly the silence of the place was broken and our privacy invaded by a crowd of shouting boys, who, all unbidden, disrobed and leaped into the pool, where they disported themselves, diving and swimming for long distances under water. When they dived to the bottom of the pool the azure water transformed them, so that they resembled figures

VIEW OF MOUNT ETNA, FROM SYRACUSE.





carved from lapis lazuli. When they came up from the depths they assured us that they were "dying of hunger." Two dark-eyed maids, appearing at the edge of the pool, peeped shyly at us, and then disappeared behind the papyrus, where we heard them laughing and splashing in the water. Presently we beheld them swimming in the transparent water of the pool, where they were in their element and as much at home as "nixies" or very youthful naiads. They swam round and round our boat, begging for soldi and "qualche cosa per mangiare"; were most importunate, were not to be denied, nor were they to be warned or shamed away. Playing naiad cannot be an agreeable pastime in the month of February even in Sicily. The poor nixies, if that is the name of the little people who preside over fountains now that the naiads have departed and Pan is dead, turned blue with cold. Their little teeth chattered, and when it seemed possible that they might drown we paid into the dripping, benumbed hand of each of them whatever it may have been, and softly entreated them to be gone. They swam to the margin of the fountain and disappeared into a bower of tangled papyrus. Truly, if we had not indeed beheld Cyane, we could not say that even in these prosaic modern days, naiads do not haunt the once sacred spring, and we should not have marvelled greatly had our boatmen told us that from the rocky shores of Old Plemmyrium, which we beheld rising in the south across the Great Harbor, we could

"Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

## XXXVII

### THE LAND OF THE CYCLOPS

**Portus Ulyssis—Polyphemus the Cyclops—"The Columbus of Sicily"—New Naxos—Tauromenion—A Portentous Sunset.**

THE railway from Catania to Messina extends along the Strait of Messina close to the water's edge. Three miles to the northward of Catania our train skirted the shore of the Bay of L' Ognina, said to be the Portus Ulyssis, a harbor, according to Virgil, sheltered from all the winds of heaven, affording ample anchorage for many ships, but near Ætna, which threatens with many thunderings at any moment to overwhelm the fleets with horrid ruin. On the beach of this land-locked haven Æneas encountered Archimenides, the miserable sailor abandoned to his fate what time Ulysses and his companions fled from the wrath of Polyphemus. On the heights overlooking the bay was the cave in which Ulysses and his companions were confined by the Cyclops. By the shore of L' Ognina, long before the coming of Ulysses, the nymph Galatea was wooed and won by Acis, the shepherd-boy, the successful rival of Polyphemus. The latter had seen, and in his uncouth fashion had made love to, the fair daughter of Nereus, and having surprised Galatea and Acis in their bower,

the monster tore great rocks from the side of Ætna, and, hurling them, crushed and killed the dainty shepherd. Galatea was inconsolable for the loss of her lover, and her heart-rending grief so touched the gods that they took pity on her and changed the blood of Acis into a limpid stream, thereafter to be called by his name, the waters of which anciently nourished the Catanian fields. For this reason, in Katana there were to be seen temples and shrines of Galatea, who was no less honored than Ceres herself. The fires of Ætna long ago drank up the sacred river, and to-day the pleasant land where the nymph and the shepherd wandered hand in hand is hidden fathoms deep beneath the lava flow of 1380 A.D. Ulysses avenged the murder of Acis when he blinded Polyphemus by putting out the Cyclops' solitary eye, preparatory to escaping with his companions from the cavern under the bellies of the Cyclops' sheep, when, in the morning, they were driven afield.

The name of Acis is perpetuated to-day in Aci Castello and Aci Reale ("the castle and land of Acis"). Aci Castello, seated on a lofty isolated rock, is a mediæval fortress, of which a deed of gift was made in 1296 by the Bishop of Catania to Ruggiero di Loria, Grand Admiral of the kingdom of Sicily when that sea-king abandoned the cause of the Aragonese and lent his mighty aid to the Angevins. This act of treachery was celebrated as a great and glorious deed by the chroniclers of the bishop's court, but later historians have labored in vain to save the name of Loria from the dishonor that tarnishes the fame and blackens the name of a traitor. Between Aci Castello and Punta dei Mulini (anciently called Cape Xiphonius)

there rises from the sea at a distance of a few hundred yards from shore a group of seven small islets, known as the "Faraglioni della Trezza" or "Scogli de' Ciclopi"—*Scopuli Cyclopum*. Of odd shapes and of bizarre formation are these rocks, which the blinded monster hurled at the ships of Ulysses when the son of Laertes, newly escaped from the cavern in which the Cyclops "dammed up his flocks," was piloting his vessel to the open sea.

"The top he tore  
From off the huge rock, and so right a throw  
Made at our ship, that just before the prow  
It overflow and fell, missed mast and all  
Exceeding little; but about the fall,  
So fierce a wave it raised that back it bore  
Our ship so far, it almost touched the shore."

Then, when Ulysses taunted Polyphemus with his blindness and impotency, one other rock,

"In size more amplified  
Than first, he ravished to him, and implied,  
A dismal strength in it, when, whirl'd about,  
He sent it after us."

The installation of two of the seven rocks of Cyclops in their present position is thus accounted for. Of the five others Homer makes no mention. All of them, like the crags of Aci Castello, are composed of basaltic columns, plutonic crystallizations. That the huge fragments of rock were thrown from Ætna by some superhuman force there seems to be little reason to doubt. Concerning Ætna, its fire and smoke, its throes and convulsions, Homer maintains unbroken silence; nevertheless, he must be a very prosaic and

sceptical person who will lightly cast doubt upon the story of Ulysses and Polyphemus merely for the sake of establishing a more or less probable geological theory. The largest of the Scogli de' Ciclopi, presumably that one which Polyphemus hurled into the sea when making his second shot at the "dog-faced" hero's ship, measures two hundred and twenty feet in height and more than two thousand feet in circumference. It is used to-day as a station of the Hydrographic Institute of Italy, and whatever may be the truth concerning its original installation, its present exact situation has been as accurately determined by almost indefinitely repeated geodetic observations as that of any other dot upon the map of the world.

Beyond Aci Reale the town of Giarre lies upon the slopes of Ætna high above the sea, and the country round was anciently famed for its chestnut-trees of almost unimaginable height and girth. The monstrous sequoiæ of the Yosemite Valley, the giant eucalypti of Australia, might be hidden away in a grove of the famous "castagni," under the branches of one of which—"Il Castagno dei Cento Cavalli"—Giovanna I. of Naples, with her entire suite, found refuge during a tempest. Beyond Giarre the Valley of the Alcantara divides Ætna from the Monti Peloritani. Near the mouth of the Alcantara (Arabic, *El-kan-tarah*), the Acesino of the Greeks, on the curving neck of Capo Schisto, Theocles, the Columbus of Sicily, founded in the eleventh Olympiad (735 B.C.) the city of Naxos, the first Greek settlement in Sicily, one year before the arrival of Archias at Ortygia, where he built the city afterwards called Syracuse. At Naxos, as Thucydides tells us, Theocles built an

altar to Apollo Archegetes (the Founder and Beginner), the first monument of Greek civilization erected in Trinacria. So much for Thucydides, but Sicilian scholars of to-day usually find warrant for asserting and maintaining that when Theocles set up in Naxos his shrine of Apollo the Founder, there already existed in Sicily—had existed, in fact, for more than one or two centuries at least—one temple at Selinus, temples of Vulcan and Hercules at Acragas, a temple of Diana on Ortygia, and a temple of Ceres at Enna, and probably many more in other parts of Sicily. Certain Sicilian archæologists resent the statements of Greek historians to the effect that when Theocles arrived in Trinacria he found a race of barbarian troglodytes. Signor Chiesi, who has written by far the best descriptive work on Sicily, laughs to scorn the assertion of the German Schneegans that the ancient Siculi, shut up in their island, removed from contact with the civilized world, were savages of the Stone Age, whereas the Greeks, the Phœnicians, and the Egyptians were in every sense of the word highly civilized peoples. Signor Chiesi agrees with Herr Schneegans so far as the Phœnicians and the Egyptians are concerned, but as for the Greeks, never and again never ("mai e poi mai"). Were there not countless temples in Trinacria, he asks, centuries before Theocles landed with his fellow-pirates upon the shore near the city that probably was possessed of temples and shrines ages before one stone of Athens was laid upon another?

We shall not follow the two scholars into the mazes of their argument. The question seems little likely to be settled definitely, and we shall probably never know for certain whether there was a man called The-

ocles, or whether he founded the city, or captured one ready made (whereof its Sicilian name stands in the shade), and called it after his adopted country, the island of Naxos. But who can assure us that there ever lived such a man as Lud, or whether he actually founded the town he named after himself, the city we of to-day call London?

Not a trace, not a vestige remains of Naxos. Abandoned shortly after its foundation by Theocles and his followers, the city fell into ruin, Dionysius destroyed it utterly, and the Naxians disappeared from history and ceased to be.

A mile beyond the sand-dunes which cover the site of the city of Theocles we came to the station of Giardini-Taormina. Giardini, the port and emporium of Taormina, lies between the foot of Monte Tauro and the bay to which the town gives its name.

In 1860 Garibaldi and his One Thousand, their Sicilian campaign gloriously ended, embarked from this little seaport to win new triumphs at Reggio, at Naples, and at Volturno. It is a happy dramatic coincidence that from the town whence Garibaldi sailed on his expedition for the liberation of Italy, there, more than twenty-five centuries earlier, Timoleon set foot on shore when he arrived in Sicily for the purpose of freeing the people from the yoke of their tyrants. At that little town, snuggling under the cliffs of Monte Tauro, close by the sea, the paths of these two heroes crossed—two men so strikingly alike in heart and soul, in honest purpose, in courage, and in truthfulness; two soldiers who, inspired by the same lofty ambitions, had devoted their transcendent abilities to the cause of Sicilian freedom—Timoleon, “the

Deliverer"; Garibaldi, "the Liberator"; the two grandest names in the Sicilian annals of thirty centuries.

Nearly four hundred feet above the sea the ancient town of Taormina occupies a narrow platform between a precipice and the cliffs of a giant rock on the top of which are to be seen the ruins of a Saracenic-Norman castle. Looking up from Giardini, Taormina seems to be but one long street, a row of houses tottering on the verge of perpendicular cliffs, with their backs to Monte Tauro. This street follows the irregular outline of the face of the crags, winding for more than a mile from the Greek theatre to the picturesque ruined tower of the Palazzo Giampoli. The road from Giardini to Taormina ascends the steeps of a beetling promontory, making many bends and zigzags, crossing and recrossing the seaward face of the rock. From every turn of the road grand views are to be obtained of the Strait of Messina, north towards Scylla and Charybdis, south past the rocks of the Cyclops, and for miles and miles onward to Syracuse and Cape Pachynus—a panorama of the whole length of the eastern coast of Sicily. Across the strait the Aspromonte mountains lift their superb outlines in the east.

We had reached Giardini in the afternoon shortly before sunset, and as we journeyed up to Taormina we beheld a series of marvellous pictures that do not fade from memory. When we had almost gained the summit, having ridden for some minutes with our backs to the setting sun, we turned sharply to the west, where the road doubled an elbow on the steep face of the hill. The spectacle presented to our astonished gaze set our hearts beating. There was re-

GREEK THEATRE. TAORMINA





vealed so magnificent a vision of earth, sea, and sky that one almost feared to look upon it. Thirty miles away the snow-crowned summit of Ætna uplifted itself immeasurably towards heaven. The contour of the mountains was limned against the sky as if etched in radiant gold. Below this shining outline the vast bulk of the pyramid showed in violet, deepening downward to royal purple. Hitherward the valley of the Alcantara lay beneath a dense, deep shadow as black as velvet, and yet, like velvet, reflecting a faint, mysterious sheen of light. High above Ætna the heavens were as blue as sapphire, but in the far west transparently golden. The crests of the mountains and the tops of the hills confronting Ætna and facing the setting sun caught and held wonderful hues of orange, pink, and rose-colored light, the glories of the dying day. Far to the south, even to the limits of sight, the sea lay in mysterious amethystine shadows—"the purple sea" of Homer and the ancient poets; the sun, apparently, unimaginably increased in size by comparison with the bulk of earthly things, was setting; the great golden orb dropped imperceptibly until its lower limb seemed almost to touch the rounded summit of the cone of Ætna. For a moment it floated just above, then stood round and fair, seemingly balanced upon the apex of the wonderful pyramid; slowly the shining globe sank behind the dome, and impenetrable shadow rushed down the steeps and hid the hither world in the blackness of night. Now we could see with distinctness a plume of smoke drifting on the wind from the mouth of the crater, glowing brilliant, fiery red, as if lighted by the glare of volcanic flames. A light mist driven by the west wind rolled

up from the farther side of the mountain and, curling in fantastic wreaths, crested the sky-line of the summit. Like the plume of smoke, these mists seemed to catch the reflections of a stupendous conflagration, and the beholder might well imagine that the volcano was in active eruption, that all its far side was a mass of boiling, seething lava, emitting blood-red flames. . It was, indeed, a stupendous spectacle ; the contadini in the vineyards paused in their work ; and women, leaving their dwellings, came into the open to gaze in awe at the phenomenon as they told their beads ; men crossed themselves, and a group of children near the place where we passed ceased playing and ran to their homes as if to seek refuge from the terror that was in the sky. Intense, unbroken silence held all the air and added to the mystery of the visitation, and it was a blessed relief to the strained senses when a church bell began tolling for vespers. The portent lasted but a few moments, and as the mimic fires of *Ætna* and the conflagration of the heavens began to pale, we passed beneath the arch of an ancient gateway and entered the town of Taormina.

## XXXVIII

### TAORMINA

Snow-flakes and Almond Blossoms — Mola — Teatro Greco—  
Isola Bella—Castello Alessio—Ætna—Garibaldi Modelled  
in Snow.

DURING the night of our arrival at Taormina it began snowing, and stormed incessantly for forty-eight hours. The front windows of our apartment in the Hôtel Timeo opened to the south, looking towards Ætna, but view there was none save of drifting, falling veils and wreaths of white that filled all the air. We did not suffer from the cold, because, in addition to the blankets on our beds, we made use of our travelling-rugs, and under these we slept at night, or, wrapped in them, sat while indoors during the day. In the evening, when the air nipped shrewdly and our wraps hardly sufficed to keep us warm, the cameriera, a buxom, jovial lass with brilliant large eyes, teeth of wonderful whiteness, a smile as sunny as mid-summer, and a most comforting laugh, brought into our chamber two scaldaraji (deep copper platters containing a few handfuls of smouldering charcoal). These she placed between our feet, and, gathering our phylacteries carefully about them, made us as snug as snug could be. Thus swaddled, we sat for hours like children taking a make-believe sleigh-ride without the

accompaniment of bells and all the snow falling out-of-doors. So we passed the evening pleasantly until bedtime, and then forgot in happy slumbers the storm that raged outside.

As it began, so the snow ceased to fall, in the night, and when the sun arose on the morning of the third day a brilliant, sparkling light glorified the white dome of *Ætna* and rendered the sea and shore resplendent beyond imagination. With intent to behold the grand prospect to be had from the hills above Taormina, we were early abroad, and, taking our way to Mola, followed a narrow bridle-path which led us through almond orchards, all sweetly blooming, untouched of frost, although the blossoms were covered with snow. Up the mountain-side we climbed over a paved causeway that zigzagged back and forth across the side of the huge rock on the brow of which sits the giant Castle of Mola. Up these same heights Dionysius of Syracuse climbed one winter's night, B.C. 304, to capture the castle preliminary to assaulting the town, and down this same steep hill-side he rolled when the townspeople drove him from their walls. But Dionysius had many lives, and, fighting, ran away to live and fight another day, when Mola had cause to rue the hour she refused his first advances.

After an hour of steady scrambling over the rocky highway, rendered slippery by the melting snow, we came to the only gate of Mola, more than two thousand feet above the sea, and, entering beneath its massive archway, found ourselves in a most curious mediæval piazza, on the side of which stands a large church having a curious portal with a round arch resting on pilasters of red marble. We saw a Greek

inscription imbedded in the masonry and tried, but in vain, to decipher the time-worn words. Opposite the church were stone settles, with their backs against the parapet of a semicircular bastion, the face of which dropped perpendicularly to the foot of the rock. On these seats, basking in the sunlight, sat a company of old men, who kept their backs to the morning sun, warming themselves. Piteous old men! Shrivelled and shrunken, feeble, decrepit, world-worn wrecks of humanity were these ancient citizens of the mountain town. Their eyes blinked painfully, teased by the dazzling snow reflections, their numbed hands trembled as they grasped their staves or held their cappotti muffled about their palsied bodies. Fully fifty of them there were, all doubled and crooked by the weight of years, fifty hopeless, helpless paupers, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans—everything." One could readily imagine that the Fates had forgotten them, leaving them in their hopelessness to drag out in bitter torment what was left to them of superfluous, miserable life. Around these human wrecks strayed a crowd of children, silent, inactive, joyless, numbed and stiffened by the unaccustomed cold of the past few days of snow and storm. Fancy the wretchedness of the old and feeble, of the sick, of the children, confined for days in comfortless cabins, tomb-like, fireless rooms, without glass in the windows, with earthen floors and stone walls; fancy the misery of all these helpless ones during the cruel, cold, and driving fury of the February gale that scourged them all those bitter days while we, well clothed, muffled in our wraps and blankets, had found it difficult to keep warm even in our beds in the well-built,

well-furnished Hôtel Timeo. The people of Mola crawled about like benumbed bees, seeking the sunniest nooks where they might warm their chilled and sluggish blood. The sufferings they had endured for three days had been too intense to be lightly forgotten, and the dreary folk were not able to put away melancholy thoughts, to smile, to enjoy the sweetness of the glorious morning. They cowered in the sunlight, a ragged, starved, and pinched concourse of woe-begone humanity. Within five minutes after our arrival in the town we were surrounded by a limping, hobbling, hungry crowd of beggars, who so beset us, accompanying our every footstep, that we shortened our stay in Mola, anxious to be gone from a scene of misery and distress. We visited the castle, where we had hoped to enjoy a magnificent prospect, but even the grandest panoramas made little impression upon our minds; our thoughts were filled with sad imaginings, conjured up by the sight of the host of miserable fellow-beings that waited for us at the castle gate.

Ah! what a land of delight would Sicily be were it not for the multitude of unutterably wretched beings that haunt the fairest scenes like ghosts from the nether world visiting the glimpses of Paradise! "Sicily is the smile of God"; in that wonderland all nature is magnificent, lavish, prodigal, but the people of this earthly paradise suffer the agonies of Tantalus, while Tisiphone, with her fearful sisters,

"Sits on the threshold day and night  
With eyes that know no sleep."

Descending by the same way by which we came, in less than half the time it took to make the ascent, we

found our way to the Greek theatre of Taormina, excavated twenty-three centuries ago, from the northern face of that spur of Monte Tauro which projects boldly from the main mountain.

The vast semicircular auditorium of step-like seats opening towards the south upon a grand and enchanting panorama of the Ionian Sea, the east coast of Sicily, and the pyramid of *Ætna*, is three hundred and thirty-six feet in diameter and encloses an orchestra one hundred and thirty feet in width. The whole interior of the theatre was originally veneered with heavy plates of marble, many of which were stolen away by the Dukes of Santo Stefano to embellish their palaces. The descendants of these despoilers studiously circulated the report that the marble had been removed by Saracen infidels in their rage for destroying all monuments of the glorious past; but the Saracens, in this instance, were the dukes themselves, and their act of vandalism recalls the pasquinade: "What the barbarians left the Barberini carried away." The Romans enlarged and restored the old structure that had fallen into ruin and retouched the original decorations, but their work, when compared with that of the Greeks, is in very doubtful taste. Where the latter built with smooth, chiselled blocks of stone the former used bricks, which gives to their additions and restorations a tawdry and vulgar appearance. The *scena* is the most important part of the theatre still remaining. Of all existing Greek stages that of Taormina is the only one, except the stage in the theatre in Pamphylia, that retains its original form, exhibiting the details of its construction. It remains to-day in an almost perfect state of preservation, so

far, at least, as its ground-plan is concerned. It is safe to say that in order to gain an adequate idea of the construction and arrangement of an ancient Greek theatre, one has but to visit Syracuse, Segesta, and Taormina, for the details that are wanting in any one of the three structures are to be found in one of the other two. The back of the scena presents the appearance of a grand portico with enriched columns, and in the wall are niches where were placed the statues of gods and heroes. The actors performed in front of this portico on a proscenium of moderate width extending forward to the orchestra. Two lateral and one central door gave entrance from a corridor that enclosed the stage, and to the right and left were dressing and waiting rooms of great size, with lofty, arched ceilings, the latter testifying to their Roman origin. The Romans also enclosed the Greek auditorium with two grand galleries, thus doubling its seating capacity, which is said to have been sufficient to accommodate forty thousand people. The inner one of the two galleries was supported on forty-five columns, corresponding to as many pilasters surmounting a wainscoting pierced with thirty-six niches for the reception of statues. From the inner gallery downward graduated rows of seats arranged in nine *cunei* and approached by ten flights of steps carved in the rock extended to the platea behind the orchestra and chorus. The two upper galleries were accessible only by stairs leading from the outside of the enclosing semicircular wall of the theatre.

The superb proportions, the massive construction, the architectural beauty of the Greek portion of the edifice awakened admiration for the artistic and poetic

BADIA VECCHIA, TAORMINA





genius of an era and a race that produced this monument of a once living and glorious civilization. As we gazed in silent wonderment at this work of the ancients we were not oppressed by the feeling of awe that overcomes the visitor to the Colosseum at Rome, that stupendous monument of the brute force of the subjugators of the world. We were enchanted by the artistic inspirations of the place, and felt the calm, pure influence of a race of men that before all else loved art and worshipped beauty in spirit and in truth. The Colosseum awakened thoughts of bloody contests, gladiatorial shows, ferocious tragedies, orgies, hecatombs of human beings thrown to wild beasts or delivered to the rage of brutal executioners who set rivers of blood flowing "to make a Roman holiday" for a superlatively cruel people. In the Greek theatre, looking out upon the calm splendors of the sea, upon the wonderful prospect of far-reaching coasts, upon snow-crowned Ætna smoking with eternal fires, our thoughts turned to the triumphs of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, who in this self-same place, ages and ages ago, took tribute of tears and laughter, ruling the hearts and minds of countless multitudes. Here Timæus of Tauromenion recited his annals; here also were chanted the songs of Stesichorus of Himera, and the noble verses of the Grand Old Man of Chios, who first of all sang the wonders of this Land of the Cyclops.

Marvellous prospect! Seated in the auditorium of the ancient theatre of Taormina, one looks across the stage, out between Corinthian columns and broken Roman arches, a fit frame for an inspiring picture, upon a glorious landscape of sea, of shore, of hill and

valley, of Ætna standing between the earth and sky. What sweeping coast-lines and sky-lines of mountains ! What color ! Violet distances, purple mountains, amethystine sea, gold of reaped fields, dark green of orange groves, silver of olive-trees and almond blossoms, glistening snows of the Pillar of Heaven, and over all the wonderful, deep, lustrous blue of the Sicilian sky.

On the plateau behind the theatre we found a numerous party of young men and boys engaged in rolling the soft, damp snow into cylinders resembling the frustum of a column of marble. Four of these drums the lads placed end on end, one above the other, raising a shaft about seven feet in height. This they quickly shaped with their hands into the form of a man wrapped in a toga, or long cloak, which fell from the shoulders of the figure in by no means ungraceful folds to the ground. Then one of the elder lads, mounted upon the shoulders of two others, roughly modelled a bust and head surmounted by a visorless cap. The sculptor gave place to another and younger lad, the genius of the party, who skilfully brought out a resemblance to Garibaldi in the rough, and, working dexterously with his fingers and a piece of stick, developed the resemblance until, without exaggeration, we may say we beheld a striking likeness of "The Liberator." The beard, the nose, the eyes, and the ears, the well-known cap, all were so skilfully designed that no one familiar even in a slight degree with the features, form, and favorite attitude of Garibaldi could for one moment doubt the verisimilitude of the snow statue. So delighted were we with the remarkable work of these young artists born and bred that we clapped our hands and shouted "Bravissimi !"

The boys modestly doffed their caps and stood expectant as we slowly examined their work. We asked one of them if they attended an art school: he smiled and pleasantly informed us that he and his companions were apprentices to tradesmen in Taormina, to carpenters, upholsterers, and the like, and that they had only amused themselves in modelling a statue of "The Grand Soldier."

"Had you a portrait, a sketch, a photograph, from which to copy so cleverly the details of the likeness?" we asked.

"Niente, signore—all Sicilian boys have the picture of Garibaldi in their hearts," said one of the youths, as he took off his cap and bowed gravely towards the statue.

Presently one of the brightest-eyed of the group asked if I Signori were not Americani. Answered in the affirmative, he asked if Garibaldi was celebrated in America. We told him yes, and that in our own city there was a statue of Garibaldi, whom Americans honored as one of the noblest men of all times. The boys were wonderfully pleased, and when one of them struck up Garibaldi's Hymn the whole company sang with great spirit as it marched round and round the snow figure. By-and-by the lads crowded around us to ask innumerable questions about America, the questions revealing their lack of knowledge of the country and its people. They listened patiently to our answers, straining their ears and minds to understand our bad Italian. One of them, the principal spokesman, informed us that in two or three years when he had become a man he intended to go to America, where, he said, "there is much work, much pay, and plenty of

money for everybody." Instantly there was a cry: "Anche io! Anche io!—I also, I also am going to America; I am strong; there is much work to do in America and much money."

Was it strange that we could not resist the temptation to invite these brave fellows to accompany us to the hotel, there to drink "un poco di vino" to the memory of Garibaldi. And they came, a dozen or more, and when the glasses were filled with wine and water, we gave as our "brindisi" "Garibaldi." This toast they drank with many cheers, but each lad in obedience to the word of him who seemed to be their leader, the young artist who had put the finishing touch to the statue, kept half a glass of wine. Then the toast-master, removing his hat, in a loud voice pronounced the word "America!" and the glasses were drained to the last drop. A small cake apiece completed the happiness of the members of this interesting company, and with many hearty hand-shakes they took leave of us and marched up the street leading to the Greek theatre, shouting "Viva l' America!" and singing Garibaldi's Hymn.

## XXXIX

### FAREWELL TO SICILY

Spellbound—Messina—Scylla and Charybdis—In the Grasp of Charybdis—Messina to Naples—The Rocks of the Sirens.

THE wonders of Taormina attracted us indescribably; the genius of the place beguiled us into forgetfulness of the fleeting hours, and charmed away all thought of setting forth on further wanderings. Every evening we planned to depart for Messina, our last Sicilian journey; every morning we wandered away to lose ourselves in the almond orchards on the hill-side below the Hôtel Timeo, or turned our steps to the old Greek theatre, thence once more to gaze at the marvellous prospect of *Ætna* and the Ionian Sea. Not until two weeks after our arrival at Taormina (we had intended staying there but two days) did we break the spell that bound us and prepare to take our departure. But, like unwilling school-boys returning after their holidays to their books, we were loath to leave the most fascinating country-side we had beheld in all Sicily. Truly, we were sad at heart when we took our places in the compartment of the railway carriage that was to bear us from the wonderland where we had dwelt in great content and happiness for so short a time.

The engine gave an unearthly shriek as it dashed

away from Giardini and plunged into a tunnel under the foot of Monte Tauro, shutting out in the twinkling of an eye all view of the landscapes we loved to look upon. When we came again into the sunlight, looking seaward, we beheld Isola Bella, the dainty sea-girt garden whence we had rowed one lovely afternoon, across the bay to the blue-and-green grottos, which, although not so renowned, are nevertheless as wonderful and as weirdly picturesque as those of Capri. Rounding the sea-face of a promontory, we came in sight of the great crags of Capo Alessio surmounted by its castle, one of the noblest ruins in Sicily, and of all most grandly placed. For a few moments we beheld high above us the rock-rooted Norman keep, rose-colored and golden in the afternoon sun, and then the train rushed into the blackness of a tunnel a thousand feet below the foundation-stones of Alessio's towers and battlements.

From Giardini northward, for thirty miles, the railway skirts the shores of the Strait of Messina, which narrows and narrows, crowding in between the mountains of Sicily on the west and the Calabrian Apennines on the east. At one moment the train whirled along narrow ledges hewn in the wall of cliffs overhanging the sea; at the next, dashed through tunnels, or crossed bridges thrown boldly over deep and gloomy cañons down which, in winter and during summer rains, rush the incalculable, irresistible floods discharged into the sea by countless "fumare." These fumare are to be distinguished from the "fiumi" of Sicily; the latter are constant streams, increasing or diminishing their flow in proportion to the volume of rainfall, but nevertheless sending at all times and sea-

sons a more or less rapid or sluggish current across the lowlands seaward. The *fumare*, on the other hand, run dry when they have drained the mountainsides, and their channels, parched by the hot sun, resemble ruined giant highways rather than the beds of water-courses. Most interesting is all the land along the shores of the Strait of Messina; the mountains, rising precipitously from the sea, are cleft and riven by *fumare*; on the intervening heights, and especially on the verge of promontories, are ruins of old castles of Saracen, of Norman days—of older times, when Romans fortified every headland, every coign of vantage, against the attack of enemies who time and time again, invading Sicily, attempted to take possession of the "Key to the Mediterranean." The general trend of the eastern shore-line of Sicily, from Messina to Syracuse, is slightly concave, suggesting the appropriate simile "the unstrung bow of Ulysses." This configuration brings the whole coast into view from both ends of the bow and from intermediate capes and promontories projecting into the sea. The grandeur of the scenery may readily be imagined when the height of the mountains on each side of *Fretum Siculum*, as the strait was anciently called, is borne in mind. The Calabrian Apennines, on the east, uplift their peaks between seven and eight thousand feet above the sea, the Montes Pelorides rise on the west to almost equal heights.

Opposite Galati we beheld across the shining waters the seaport Reggio, ancient Rhegium, where St. Paul landed on his voyage from Syracuse to Puteoli; and, a little to the north of Reggio, and opposite Tremestiere, tower the loftiest peaks of the Calabrian Moun-

tains that rise from the "Toe of the Italian Boot." Owing to the outline of its shores and tidal movements of its waters, there is almost always a strong current setting north or south, according to the prevailing wind, through the Strait of Messina, even now one of the great water highways of the world, which hourly presents a busy scene of great interest to those who take delight in watching the manœuvring of countless ships, fleets of coasters and fishing-vessels.

We had lingered so long at Taormina that we were able to devote but a few hours to sight-seeing in Messina—"Messina la Nobile," as it has been called for many centuries. But we had inquired diligently concerning what guide-books call "the attractions, features, and places of interest" in and about the city, had studied carefully many books of travel, from all of which we learned that, while Messina occupies, perhaps, the most ancient site of all Sicilian cities, it contains but a few remains of antiquity, still fewer relics of mediæval days, and almost no objects of contemporaneous interest. Owing to its position, exposed in all ages to countless sieges, assaults, land and sea attacks, bombardments, conflagrations, and earthquakes, Messina of the Greeks, of the Romans, of the Byzantines, of the Saracens and Normans—in a word, Messina of the past, has disappeared utterly from the face of the earth. Even as late as 1848 the Neapolitan soldiers of King Bomba ruthlessly obliterated the few remaining relics of ancient days which had escaped the unimaginable destruction wrought by time and weather, by natural convulsions, but principally by hosts of enemies during ages of incessant warfare, until the citadels, monuments, churches, convents, pub-

CASTELLO S. ALFESSIO

CASTELLO S. ALFESSIO





lic buildings, and private houses of Messina were reduced to an indescribable mass of ruins. On these ruins has risen a new city, modern Messina, reconstructed since 1848—a handsome, well-built town of about seventy thousand inhabitants, the seat of an archbishopric and of a university, and second in commercial importance to Palermo alone of all Sicilian cities. The houses of Messina extend along the shore for the distance of one and a half miles, occupying a narrow strip of land between the water and the hills. On the slopes above the town are vineyards and olive groves, orchards and gardens, and all the rounded heights are crowned with fortresses and the connecting crests with lines of fortifications.

“Il Porto di Messina,” the grand harbor, about four miles in circumference, is enclosed by “Il Braccio di San Ramieri,” a low sand spit, which extends into the sea in the form of a sickle, recalling the fact that the founders of the city (Greek pirates from Cumæ) called it “Zancle” (The Sickle). Il Corso Vittorio Emanuele, “La Marina,” which curves along the margin of Il Porto, is flanked by an imposing row of three-story buildings, once the palaces of nobility, but now transformed, many of them, into warehouses, which at certain seasons are literally packed with boxes of oranges and lemons. At the time of our visit to La Marina these fruits seemed to be as common and plentiful as coals on the docks and wharves at Newcastle.

Promptly on our arrival at Messina we were driven to “La Matrice,” the cathedral founded by Count Roger in 1098, but we found little of the Norman structure remaining save the portals of the façade, which are enriched with wonderful stone carvings, the

pulpit of sculptured marble, an alto-rilievo of Saint Jerome by Gagini, and a few badly preserved landscapes in "tarsia" on the backs of the seats of the choir. Of the twelfth-century mosaics, for which this cathedral is justly celebrated, we saw nothing, as they were screened by canvases, behind which workmen were busy making certain restorations deemed necessary for their preservation. Upon the altars in some of the chapels we noticed sundry cheap tinsel votive offerings of pious sailors who had escaped the dangers of the sea, as they believed, through the intercession of the saint, or of the Madonna, to whom the shrine was dedicated. We examined curiously some of these gifts — models of ships, rough sketches of tempest-tossed vessels—and we recalled the fact that in the ancient temples of Neptune, one of which stood on Cape Pharos, near the city, and from which twenty-six columns of granite were brought to embellish this same Christian cathedral of Messina, Greek and Roman mariners had hung upon the altars of the sea-gods similar offerings to testify their gratitude to the divinities who had rescued their supplicants from "insatiate Charybdis and the wrath of Scylla." Strange importations from a pagan temple of material and ceremony to embellish and sanctify a Christian church! As in the days of Neptune, so now in the "Day of the Son of Man," the question, "Where, then, are the mariners who vowed but were not saved?" remains unanswered—unanswerable.

Æneas himself could not have wished for fairer skies or smoother seas than favored us when the *Calabria* steamed out of Il Porto di Messina. Seven and a half miles away and dead ahead we beheld the

rock of Scylla shining brightly in the sunlight, on the Calabrian side of the channel, so plain a mark that it would indeed go hard with us if we were not able to shun its teeth and fangs. But we remembered that Charybdis lay in wait for us half a point off our port bow, and there was no telling what a little careless twist of the helm might do if, in avoiding the danger we plainly saw on our right hand, we timorously gave Scylla too wide a berth, and so fell into the tangled currents on our left.

There is little trouble in locating Scylla. Even at night or during thick weather the rock, which in Homer's time was "a roaring and voracious chimera of the sea, a beautiful virgin above, a monster with wolf's body and dolphin's tail below," is easily to be recognized and as easily to be avoided. It stands boldly out from the precipitous coast, which trends northeast from the narrowest part of the Strait of Messina, a lofty, rounded promontory on which is seated an ancient castle frowning down upon the town that lies at its southeastern base. Flowing close by the foot of the rock is a tide-rip, or eddy, sometimes dignified by the title "The Whirlpool of Scylla"; and evidence is not wanting to prove that the whirlpool—not the rock—was the terror of mariners in classic days. We shall provoke no argument on this point, but merely indicate that the doubt as to the identity of Scylla arises from the fact that the advocates of the whirlpool theory translate the words "*in Scyllam*," occurring in the well-known line "*Incidis in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim*," "into Scylla," while those who maintain the rock theory insist that the true meaning is "upon Scylla." A similar con-

fusion of ideas exists regarding Charybdis, so that of only one thing we moderns may well be sure—to wit, that Charybdis is not, and never has been, a rock, as most classical dictionaries and encyclopædias would have us believe. Charybdis is a current which sweeps along the shore of Cape Faro, off the point of which there is a whirlpool that, even to-day, is considered dangerous to sailing-vessels. But the name Charybdis is also applied to a circular current which ebbs and flows at the point of the Siccle of Messina, seven and a half miles from Cape Faro. This latter-mentioned whirlpool is called “Il Garofano” (The Carnation), owing to its form and the appearance of its waves, which rise and spread in widening circles like the petals of that flower. But most to be feared is that whirlpool of Charybdis at the point of Cape Faro, where “The Strait” is no more than thirty-six hundred yards in width—that is to say, from Faro, in Sicily, southwardly across the water to the fishing village of Cannitello, in Calabria. We were given an exhibition of the force and eccentricity of this strenuous tide-rip when, mindful of the warning of Ovid (“*medio tutissimus ibis*”), we ran the gantlet of Scylla and Charybdis (which feat of seamanship we had little difficulty in performing, as Scylla is but a little more than three and a half miles distant from Faro, about five points to the south of east); and so escaped from the narrow confines of the Strait of Messina into the widening expanse of the Tyrrhenian Sea. As the *Calabria*, keeping close to the point of Cape Faro, crossed an imaginary line drawn between the Sicilian Sands and the Rock of Scylla, we noticed a large schooner becalmed within two hundred yards of the crescent sand-

spit, that forms what American and Dutch sailors call "the point of the hook." There was not a breath of air stirring, and the little craft was drifting rapidly with the current that would inevitably carry her, and in a very few moments, upon the sands in front of the light-house on the Cape. Her crew had seen the danger that threatened them, and people on shore were signalling frantically, shouting, gesticulating, running up and down the beach in a state of great excitement, expecting the stranding of the apparently hopeless vessel. The great depth of water under her keel precluded the possibility of bringing the schooner to anchor, and there were no tugs in sight. But the crew were equal to the emergency. Two boats, with tow-lines made fast in their stern sheets, were promptly got away, and these joined by a larger boat from shore, and all directed by the master of the schooner, were pulled to a distance of a hundred yards ahead of the vessel obliquely from the line of her drift until they reached the calm water outside of the sweeping current. Rowing lustily, the oarsmen in the three boats checked the set of the schooner towards the sands, and she slowly, almost imperceptibly, swung out of danger, just grazing the point of the hook with her rudder-post as she slipped from the grasp of "engulfing Charybdis."

Interested in watching the manœuvres of the endangered schooner, we entirely forgot our own imaginary peril and without special wonder passed safely into the open sea north of Cape Faro, from which foreland we laid our course to the Rocks of the Sirens, at the entrance to the Bay of Naples.



## APPENDIX

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### A

#### LA MAFIA

SOME Sicilian scholars write the word with one "f" (Mafia), others with two (Maffia). Giuseppe Alonghi, for instance, prefers the latter, Giuseppe Pitrè the former orthography. Beyond Sicily the word is commonly spelled Maffia. There is a Tuscan word "Maffia" (a synonym of "miseria"—*i. e.*, misery, distress); but Pitrè denies that the Sicilian word is derived from, or bears any relation to, the Tuscan "Maffia." Roquefort, in his *Glossaire de la Langue Romane*, attempts to prove that Mafia is derivable from Maufe—Maufais—*e. g.*, le dieu mauvais; *i. e.*, le diable. Other writers, seeking the root of the word in the Arabic, pretend that Mafia is derived from Mâ-âfir, the name of an Arab tribe anciently settled at Palermo. Pitrè asserts that Mafia, a word little known prior to 1860, is used to describe an idea or thing peculiar to Palermo or western Sicily. He states that in Il Borgo, a district of Palermo, the word Mafia, with its derivatives, formerly implied beauty, grace, perfection, excellence of an especial type. A handsome girl of the people, conscious of her good looks, showily dressed, stylish, striking, "stunning," was said "to have mafia," "to be mafiusa," "mafiusedda." The house of a citizen of Il Borgo, strongly built, well furnished and arranged,

was spoken of as “una casa mafiusedda,” or “ammafiata.” An object of domestic use of evident superior quality was described as “mafiusa.” Often in Palermo to-day one hears the street-cry “Arance-mafiuse”—“fine oranges”—etc. The word Mafia, used in its original sense with reference to a man, formerly implied more than mere physical attractions—viz., “the consciousness of being a man, and acting a man’s part,” displaying true courage as distinguished from boldness, bravado, arrogance, truculence. “A man of mafia”—“mafiusu” (or, as the Italians write it, “mafioso”)—did not necessarily inspire fear, because few men were more polite, more mannerly, than the Mafiusi of old days. Since 1860 the word Mafia has received a new interpretation. It no longer possesses the significance originally given to it by the denizens of Il Borgo di Palermo. In 1863 Giuseppe Rizzoto, a playwright of Palermo, wrote and acted in a melodrama representing certain phases of life in the great prison of Palermo. Rizzoto at first called his play (which originally consisted of two acts) “I Mafiusi della Vicaria,” which may be translated “The Heroes of the Penitentiary.” Having scored a wonderful and instantaneous success in his dual rôle of playwright and actor, Rizzoto added two acts to his play and reproduced it under the title “I Mafiusi,” a melodrama which has kept the boards for thirty years, having been performed more than three thousand times in the principal cities of Sicily and Italy. In time the names and the deeds of I Mafiusi of the prison of Palermo became known to all classes of Italians, and in this way the words Mafia and Mafioso insinuated themselves into the common speech of Italy. Mafia is to be found in none of the older standard Italian dictionaries; it is, however, beginning to be recognized by lexicographers, who accord it a line in their latest editions. So much we can say concerning the word Mafia, its orthoepy, its orthography, and its etymology; but when we come to deal with La Mafia,

MESSINA CATHEDRAL





the thing, the idea—in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's phrase, "that is another story."

That a definite and satisfactory answer to the inquiry, What is La Mafia? is wanting, may be due to the fact recorded by Giuseppe Alonghi, that "It is dangerous for Sicilians to occupy themselves too earnestly with the study of this question." With other writers Alonghi holds that La Mafia is not a sect or cult, nor yet an association having rules, regulations, or by-laws; that Il Mafioso is not necessarily a brigand, a robber, or a highwayman. Pitrè describes Il Mafioso simply as "a man of courage and self-reliance, of action," "*Che non porta mosche sul naso*" ("Who does not allow flies to sit on his nose"); but this definition falls far short of the modern purport and significance of the word.

La Mafia is the consciousness of one's own importance and power; an exaggerated conceit of one's own individuality, in the sense of being superior to moral, social, or political law, sole arbiter of all questions concerning one's relations to other individuals or to society at large. Hence the intolerance of Il Mafioso of all authority, his contempt for law, his lack of respect for the opinions of others, his truculent defiance of all authority save that of his own individual judgment, his refusal to appeal to law to establish his rights. If he is offended he declines to have recourse to the ordinary channels of justice, he refuses to go to law. If he does so, it is held to be a proof of his weakness ("*debolezza*"), and is, moreover, an offence against the unwritten code of La Mafia known as "*Omertà*." La Mafia is a phase of Sicilian society; it is not a compact organization of individuals bound together by oaths, a secret society of members who recognize one another by grips and passwords. It is a state of social immorality tacitly acquiesced in by an indefinite number of Sicilians, who order their living, regulate their thinking, according to a code of ethics called "*Omertà*."

According to Bonfadini, La Mafia is a development and perfecting of individual influence, enhancing every possibility for evil-doing. It is the expression of the brutal instinct of self-preservation on the part of all individuals who wish to live, not by labor, but by violence, crime, and intimidation. Franchetti describes it as the survival of a mediæval sentiment which brings about a union of persons of all ranks and classes, of all professions, of all kinds, who, without apparent reason for constant and regular association, find themselves always reuniting to promote their common interests, to nullify the operations of law and justice, and to set at naught the authority of government. This "mediæval sentiment" operates most powerfully upon the minds of men who believe themselves able to order their own affairs independently of equity and law. La Mafia, therefore, may be said to be a conspiracy of the strong and masterful against the weak and fearful.

Only a small minority of Sicilians are veritable Mafiosi, but this masterful, active minority, inspired by the spirit of evil, "having Omertà in their hearts," terrorize the unorganized, timorous, passive majority, the peaceable citizens who go in fear they know not of what evils, and, knowing the impotence of law to protect them, are disposed to shield the criminal rather than to deliver him up to justice, choosing to perjure themselves in order to acquit a Mafioso who has injured them rather than, by testifying against him, to run the risk of falling victims to his vengeance.

The Mafiosi, who have their so-called code of honor (as have the believers in the code of the Duello), disregard social law, and, accepting Omertà, are guided by its teachings, and by it regulate their lives and adjust their relations to their fellow-men. In the opinion of the Mafioso, Omertà lifts him above all law, and imposes upon him the obligation to settle all controversies by force and violence, or, if he himself is not powerful enough to accomplish his

purpose, by appeal to the most powerful representative of Omertà in his district. This appeal of the less to the more powerful creates the distinction between "alta" and "bassa" Mafia, high and low Mafia; "the Mafia in yellow gloves" and "the Mafia in caps," two classes of Mafiosi, the protectors and the protected, patrons and clients.

Members of the alta Mafia settle their difficulties with the sword, the bassa Mafia with knives, and no member of the Mafia, high or low, considers himself completely satisfied if the adjustment has not been brought about by other means than by an appeal to social law. Mafiosi have no respect for law; they are a law unto themselves, and believe that "tra la legge e la Mafia, la più temibile non è la prima"—"between law and La Mafia, the first is not the most to be feared."

Sicilian scholars are not of one mind concerning the etymology of Omertà, but the weight of authority is in favor of the definition "manliness," "to play the man," "to be serious, earnest, strong," or, as the Sicilians say, "to have blood in the veins." Omertà, from Omu (Sicilian), Uomo (Italian) a man.

Omertà, the code of ethics of La Mafia, consists of popular sayings, proverbs, apothegms, expressed generally in "il gergo Mafioso," a variable, inorganic vernacular or slang that resembles "the patter" of the English swell-mob or of American "crooks." The purport and intent of Omertà is to awaken and keep alive and active in the minds of those whose natural criminal tendencies fit them to be the instruments of La Mafia sentiments that encourage every Mafioso to make himself independent of law and society, *e. g.* :

"La furca è pri lu poviru, la giustizia pri lu fissu."

("The gallows for the poor, justice for the fool.")

This and many other proverbs express the contempt of La Mafia for law. That a Mafioso should always be on

his guard and go armed is a theory inculcated by many proverbs ; *e. g.* :

“ Scupetta e muggieri nun si 'mprestano.”

(“ Never lend your gun or your wife.”)

It will be noted that “gun ” is mentioned first, as the more important article of the two. A favorite threat of the Mafiosi is :

“ Si moru mi drivocu, si campu t' allampu.”

(“ If I die I shall be buried, if I live I shall kill you ”)

(“ t' allampu,” *i. e.*, snuff you out suddenly like a lamp).

Omertà also teaches the uselessness—the absurdity, in fact—of investigating crime or attempting to discover a criminal :

“ Quannu cc'e lu mortu, bisogna pinsari a lu vivu.”

(“ When a man is dead, it is better to think of the living.”)

The most commonly used of all the proverbs of Omertà is :

“ Sangu lava sangu.”

(“ Blood washes blood.”)

Above all, Omertà inculcates the duty of silence. Sicilians find wit and wisdom in many proverbs the moral of all of which is that “in the presence of the law silence is a duty.”

“ Bell' arti parrari picca.”

(“ To speak little is a fine art.”)

“ Cui parra si cunfessa, e cui fa detta paga.”

(“ Who speaks confesses, and he who makes debts pays.”)

“ La vucca è traditura di lu cori.”

(“ The voice is traitor to the heart.”)

“ L' omu chi parra assai, nun dici nenti.”

(“ The man who talks enough says nothing.”)

“ L' omu chi parra picca è sapienti.”

(“ The man who talks little is wise.”)

“ La tistimunianza è bona 'nsina chi nun nòci a lu prossimu.”

(“ Testimony is good if it doesn't hurt the next one.”)

**"Zoccu nun ti apparteni nè mali nè bene."**

**("Of that which does not concern you, say neither good nor evil.")**

Moreover, the following fable is familiar to all Sicilians :

**"Once upon a time Speaking and Eating requested King Solomon to decide which of them should control the Mouth, and Solomon decided that Eating, not Speaking, should control the Mouth of Man, lest Speaking be the ruin of the Man. Since then the less a Man talks the better he has prospered."**

Silence and mystery are, therefore, the foundations of Omertà. Unless he keep silent, a Mafioso cannot be a man (*l' omu*) as the word is defined by Omertà. He must be silent if he wishes to remain hidden from the eyes of justice. If he talks about others he contracts debts that he will most certainly be called upon to pay to the uttermost. If he has never talked he need not fear that any one will testify against him in his time of trouble. Any man who has the art of keeping silent, who believes that he can protect himself against all other men, who scorns to appeal to law for protection, who is the law to himself, such a man has Omertà in his heart, and is said to be a Mafioso.

Now, this thing Omertà, this so-called code of La Mafia, prevails in Sicily, is respected throughout the island, to a less degree, it is true, in the eastern than in the western parts. If it be a survival of a mediæval sentiment, as Franchetti holds it to be, the fact that it is most powerful to-day in those districts where the Saracens ruled longest and most absolutely would seem to prove that Omertà is a relic of the lawlessness which characterized Moslem rule in Sicily.

Crimes are committed in the most daring manner, and rarely, if ever, are the authorities able to discover the authors of them. Nobody denounces the malefactors, al-

though they may be well known ; nobody will give evidence against the criminals if they are arrested on suspicion. Not even the wounded victim of an assault, who may be dying of his wounds, can be induced to break silence. "He dies and makes no sign," or, if he should recover, and be strong enough and bold enough, he makes an early opportunity to wreak his vengeance upon the authors of his injuries. If he is not strong enough nor bold enough to deal with his enemies he suffers and remains silent. Frequently it happens that in the first moments after the commission of a crime the police have succeeded in obtaining some clue to the perpetrators of it from a witness, who, in the police court, at an unguarded moment, or laboring under great excitement, denounces the criminals ; but at the jury trial this same witness denies what he has previously said, withdraws his accusations, and the criminal escapes punishment.

The whole fabric of La Mafia rests on murder. The theory of Omertà is that the assassin is always, if not actually present, lurking near, and prepared to act his part. And there is no department of social life in which this mysterious power, the power that is greater than law, the power that is greater than government, La Mafia, does not prevail.

All brigands are Mafiosi, but all Mafiosi are not brigands. It would be a great mistake to suppose that La Mafia confines itself to the commission of acts of brigandage and assassination.

When one reads the tales of "brigantaggio," one can well believe that life in Sicily at the present time is in many respects similar to life on "the Border" during the first hundred years after the union of Scotland and England, "except that the crimes of the Sicilian outlaws are unredeemed by any touch of generosity, chivalry, or manly feeling of any kind." \*

\* T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE

Brigandage is the most violent demonstration of La Mafia; it is that manifestation of Omertà of which foreigners naturally hear most, but, so far as the Sicilians are concerned, brigandage is by no means the worst feature of the general lawlessness; it is the phase of La Mafia that it will be easiest to suppress. Of all the evils that afflict Sicily it will be the first to disappear when the island is properly policed; it is rapidly disappearing, owing to the vigorous and wise policy now pursued by the government at Rome.

The most potent for evil ("prepotente"), the cleverest cheat ("farabutto"), the most daring villain ("facinoroso"), the most truculent bully—in a word, the ablest Mafioso in a district—is known as Capo Mafioso, and this superlative malefactor rules despotically until a stronger than he kills him or usurps his authority. Every Capo Mafioso seeks to secure as his partisans the assassins and malefactors of his district; he invites alliances with the Capi Mafiosi of other districts, and these allies make common cause against all enemies so long, and only so long, as their joint interests are subserved by their unholy league. La Mafia of a district ("Combriccola," an assemblage of evil-disposed persons) is known to Italian law as "associazione di malfattori," or "associazione a delinquere." Such associations are composed to a certain extent of the upper classes ("gentiluomini"), and almost without exception of the lower classes ("plebi"), or, as they are known in Sicily, the "galantuomini" and "picciuotti." The members of the alta Mafia rarely stoop to the commission of vulgar crimes. They are powerful, are rich, or have established their reputation as insolent, fearless, cruel bravos; and they have but to hint at the violence they wish to see committed, and their retainers, their clients, of the Mafia bassa, stand ready to act, to murder, to rob, abduct, burn, if the patron do but so much as wink his eye or nod his head. In certain localities the organization of La Mafia is more or less perfect, compos-

ing a criminal society which in "il gergo Mafioso" is known as "la cosca" (the leaf); a group of such societies is called "la cacocciula" (carciofo—*i. e.*, artichoke); but La Mafia is not a compact association, and so far as Sicily at large is concerned there is no general organization of Mafiosi. Nevertheless, La Mafia is a complex social phenomenon which manifests itself in as many ways as there are crimes against God and human-kind. It infects and afflicts the whole social and political life of Sicily. It is admitted to exist, it is accepted as a matter of course, and it involves all classes of society, it pervades every department of life.

As in other lands, in every community, there are evil-minded persons, so in each town and village, and in every country district of Sicily, there may be said to be Mafiosi, who, without formal organization, consort together for the furtherance of common interests. When it serves their purpose they act in concert in defiance of law and order; their interests changed and clashing, they quarrel among themselves, and by their vendettas throw the community into disorder, while they murder and commit outrages without let or hindrance. La Mafia operates with knife, with gun, with dagger, with halter, with fire, and with poison. It sequesters people, whom it holds for ransom; it tyrannizes over honest people by the terror of its name. It enters into affairs of all kinds; it busies itself to secure verdicts in the courts in favor of its friends, and to secure the condemnation of its enemies; it terrorizes witnesses on the stand and closes their mouths, or compels them, by the silent, unspoken threat of its existence, to commit perjury. It is said that in times past it even dared to coerce the judiciary. Judges on the bench feared to deliver just verdicts with the vengeance of La Mafia hanging over their heads like the sword of Damocles.

The condition of affairs implied by the existence of La Mafia is not peculiar to Sicily; the name La Mafia is sim-

**CARVED PORTAL. MESSINA CATHEDRAL**





ply a Sicilian name for a condition of society that has prevailed in all countries in their progress from barbarism to civilization, when those countries have reached an epoch in their history similar to that through which Sicily is passing at the present time. If Sicily to-day lingers under the shadow of mediæval barbarism, it is because Sicily has remained stationary while the rest of the civilized world has advanced. "Sicily is not of to-day." She presents to the study of the world a state of society for the analogue of which, in England, we should probably have to cry back to the time of Henry VII. or Henry VIII., when England was passing from beneath the yoke of feudalism and entering upon a new and higher national life. In Germany a similar condition of things existed in the years that followed the disasters of the Thirty Years' War; and France presented a similar picture of semi-barbarism, of social disorder, during the fifty years that preceded the French Revolution.

It is not true, as is sometimes alleged, that under the reign of the Bourbons there was less crime in Sicily; it is not true that the thing called La Mafia was unknown prior to 1860. In the days of the Bourbons brigandage was a monopoly, the profits of which were enjoyed by the government itself; the greatest Mafiosi in the island were the government officials, the most desperate bravos were the police. Of the causes that have brought about a state of society from which La Mafia, with its code of ethics, Omertà, emanates as naturally as malaria emanates from a noisome swamp, it is not our purpose here and now to speak, but we are convinced that La Mafia and Omertà are not the causes of the disorder and misery that prevail in Sicily to-day; they are but two symptoms of a social disease that, unless its progress is checked, will slowly but surely wear away the life of a brave but unhappy people. Of one thing we may be assured—the present government of Italy, assisted at times by the local authorities, is wisely ap-

plying the remedies which will, if persisted in, crush the power of La Mafia, eradicate Omertà, and, finally, establish a reign of law and order in an island that had been barbarized by centuries of infamous misgovernment.

NOTE.—The foregoing account of La Mafia and Omertà has been compiled from so many books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc., that it has been impossible in every instance to credit to their authors the various statements it contains. My object has been to cast a little light upon a subject concerning which much matter has been given to the press that is, to say the least, ill considered, if not entirely sensational.

W. A. P.

## B

### BRIGANDAGE

GUY DE MAUPASSANT, treating of brigandage in Sicily in the year 1890, unhesitatingly informs the travelling public that if it is in search of "blows of poniards" and "arrestations" it had better look for them in Paris or in London and not waste its time in Sicily. He moreover utterly discredits the stories current in his and other countries of the outrages on persons and property alleged to have been committed by Sicilian highwaymen, and dismisses the subject as arbitrarily as Theodore de Banville has settled the question of "poetical license." "Il n'y en a pas!" So of brigands in Sicily, Guy de Maupassant would have us believe that "there are none."

René Bazin, who visited Sicily in 1893, asserts without fear of contradiction that there are no brigands in Sicily. "Il n'existe plus de brigands en Sicile." Sicilians will tell you that the idea that Sicily is infested by "briganti" is ridiculous. They admit, however, that "brigantaggio" is rife in Calabria and Sardina, but not in Sicily. On the other hand,

Calabrians and Sardinians assure you that if you are looking for brigands you must go to Sicily.

It is not to be disputed that the brigand of classic times, the brigand of romance and Italian opera, is no longer to be found in Sicily. The fascinating villains, the popular heroes, the Francatrippas, Pasquale Brunos, Schiavorris, Luigi Vampas, Beppe Mastrillos—the picturesque cavalieri who, in the Sicilian phrase, “gave themselves to the campagna” in the good old days, arrayed in velveteens and gold lace, with plumes proudly nodding in their hats, who climbed mountains with the graceful agility of the chamois or moufflon—the dainty gentry whose feet were encased in kidskin boots, whose arms glistened with silver and inlaid gold, have disappeared, and of them it may with truth be said in the words of René Bazin, “ils n'existent plus.” But that there are ruffians, highwaymen, horse-thieves, and assassins in Sicily may be readily gathered from the story of certain members of La Banda Maurina—that is to say, “The Brigands of Santo Mauro Castelverde, in the Province of Palermo.”

Santo Mauro has for many years borne an infamous reputation as a resort of a band of desperadoes who oppressed by their presence the neighborhood of their chosen encampment in the fastnesses of the Madonian mountains, where they were wont to assemble. This band of miscreants murdered peaceable citizens, terrorized peasants and proprietors alike, harried the country, committing rapine and arson, assaulted innocent men and women—and, until lately, with impunity. Nor did these “bravi” hesitate to turn their knives against their own associates, committing murders on all occasions upon the slightest provocation, or upon no provocation, at times apparently inspired solely by the delight it gave them to shed human blood.

Shortly before we arrived in Sicily Giuseppe Leonardo and Giovanni Botindari (ringleaders), and eight other mem-

bers of the band, were arrested and safely lodged in prison. Their trial, which lasted a month, was held in the Assize Court of Palermo, and, as we were frequently present during its progress, we learned the story of the criminals at the bar.

Botindari, who pleaded "not guilty" to thirty-two indictments for manslaughter, attempted to extenuate his guilt by attributing his first crime to "fate." He asserted that he was the victim of a train of circumstances over which he had no control, and insisted that therefore he was morally innocent of all subsequent delinquencies, as he had no alternative but to continue to live, as he was doomed by social law to live after his first offence, as a thief and an assassin. He testified that he was born of respectable parents, who sent him to school until he was thirteen years of age. His parents died, and he began life as a macaroni-maker. At nineteen he married, and lived happily with his wife and children until he was twenty-five, when he fell a victim to the "fatality" that wrecked his life and utterly changed his career. Family troubles drove him to commit murder; he attempted to assassinate his brother-in-law, and, fearing the vengeance of the wounded man's family, fled to the mountains — "gave himself to the campagna." From that time he admitted he became an habitual criminal, and was thenceforward known as "Botindari the Brigand." For all his subsequent career of crime, he argued, he was not to blame; "he was a victim of fate, of circumstances over which he had no control." He reiterated that formula as if he had found in it a balm for his troubled conscience.

Botindari's chief associate in crime was Giuseppe Leonardo, whose first offence (committed while he was a boy) was the attempted murder of his cousin, with whom he had a falling out about family matters. Giuseppe went to the house where his cousin was staying, called him out, and fired a gun-shot at him, but missed him. In this way Giuseppe Leonardo "gave himself to the campagna."

The most sensational, although by no means the most tragical, of all the exploits of La Banda Maurina was the abduction and attempted assassination of Baron Spitalieri, and its daylight attack on the castle of his aunt, the Baroness Ciano. It was for this crime that the prisoners were arraigned as above related.

It was known that the baroness, padronessa of the manor of Santo Torado and other contiguous properties, received the rentals from her lands on August 20. On that day Baron Spitalieri went with his son Felice to Poirà, the country-seat of the baroness. The next morning the baron left the castle, accompanied by several workmen, for the purpose of showing them where to build a water conduit. In a ravine near the castle he perceived some horses fully caparisoned. At the same time he descried a number of armed men lurking in the underbrush. He did not at first believe that they were brigands, as, up to that moment, brigandage was not known in his country-side, and he had been accustomed to go about alone.

"Are you the Baron Spitalieri?" asked one of the brigands. The baron replied "I am," and was immediately surrounded; his companions tried to escape. One of the brigands said: "Do not be afraid; we do not want to take your life. We want money." He was taken to the castle, and one of the band delivered a letter directed to the baroness, in which 50,000 lire was demanded for the baron's ransom. Another of the brigands insisted that the "sum ought to be 500,000 lire." Just at that moment Il Baronello Felice (the little baron) came running out of the door, having a gun in his hand. The brigands fired at him, and at the people who came to the castle windows. One of the shots grazed the head of Il Baronello, burning his hair. A brigand assured the baron that they would kill "any one who appeared in uniform or bearing arms." The life of young Spitalieri was spared by Candino, who that day, act-

ing as chief brigand, would not permit any outrage to be perpetrated on the baron, on his son, or on his aunt the baroness. The band, however, wounded a servant with a knife, upon which Candino exclaimed, with an oath, "He who to-day spills a drop of human blood will have to reckon with me!" Quiet being restored, the baron's ransom—50,000 lire—was paid to the brigands by the chaplain to the baroness, and the baron was released. The brigands departed, but soon returned and "with a flourish of arms," invaded all the apartments of the castle, smashing the furniture and ornaments. They found several boxes full of coin and bank-bills; these the robbers emptied, taking in all about 250,000 lire. The baron testified "that the brigands literally stuffed themselves with bank-bills, and one carried off with him a sack of coin on his shoulder." When the castle was looted the band finally departed, all save one of the brigands, who returned to restore a gold watch, saying "We do not want trinkets; they are too compromising."

Nine months after the assault on the castle of La Baronella, Botindari was captured by the carabinieri, after a desperate fight lasting five hours, during which the brigand chief defended himself, stationed on the top of a high cliff in the mountains. Thereafter Leonardo also fell into the hands of the police, and later still the carabinieri laid certain other members of La Banda Maurina by the heels after a hot fight, which lasted an hour, during which Rinaldi, a particularly ferocious bandit, was killed in the conflict with the public forces. Others of the brigands escaped, but the carabinieri had broken up La Banda Maurina by capturing eight of its members, killing others, and driving the remaining few from their accustomed lurking-places.

While the captured brigands were in prison awaiting their trial, the fugitive members of La Banda Maurina made their appearance in July, 1894, in the province of Messina. The presence of the brigands in their neighborhood alarmed the

citizens of Cesaro, a little town near Troina, and Francesco Leanza, a farmer, determined to rid the country of the desperati. Leanza is a man of gigantic stature, a wonderful shot, of whom *Giornale di Sicilia* asserts that "he can hit a soldo piece with a bullet fired from his gun while his horse is galloping at full speed." Be this as it may, Leanza, his three sons, and two campieri (farm hands) succeeded in stealing up close to five brigands seated around their camp-fire, roasting the flesh of a cow they had stolen from a herdsman of Pozzillo. At a signal from Leanza he and his companions opened fire, and five "famosi maurini" were killed. A sixth brigand, who had been acting as vedette, hearing the reports of the guns, ran towards the camp-fire and was promptly shot, dropping dead in his tracks.

It is the boast of the people of the province of Messina that a brigand cannot set foot in their territory and live, and Leanza and his men had vindicated the good name of their native province. What wonder, then, that the six men of Cesaro became the heroes of the hour, and were greatly honored not only in their own town, but in all parts of the island. For the "brillantissimo servizio" rendered to their province and to the people of Sicily, Leanza, his three sons, and his two campieri were given a reward of 25,000 lire, to be divided among them. By the death of the six brigands La Banda Maurina was finally broken up—the most redoubtable of its members were dead or in prison or had fled the country.

During the trial of Botindari, Leonardo, and their captured associates, the prisoners were defended by some of the ablest lawyers at the Sicilian bar. Botindari had the services of seven advocates and counsellors of distinction and ability. Leonardo was defended by three of the ablest lawyers in Palermo. All the others had counsel, either through retainer or through assignment by the court.

On the bench in the court-room, the ancient refectory of

the Convent of San Francesco, sat three of the ablest and most distinguished judges of the Italian courts. The jury was carefully chosen, and the trial was conducted with a solemnity and an impressiveness that would have become the highest of English or American tribunals. The large crowd of spectators attending each session was orderly, intensely interested, but remarkably respectful in demeanor, and the verdict of the jury (which remained in deliberation for six hours) was received by all law-abiding, patriotic Sicilians with the greatest satisfaction. Exact and even justice was meted out by the court and jury to as brutal a gang of malefactors as ever infested any country in the world. It must be remembered that the death penalty has been abolished in Italy; a fact that the many victims of La Banda Maurina still living undoubtedly deplore. Botindari and Leonardo were sentenced to hard labor, in solitary confinement, for life. Others of the band received minor sentences, and two old men were discharged, as there was no evidence that they had ever participated in any crime, and they could not be held responsible in law for the misdeeds of a younger generation of their families.

In relating the story of Botindari, Leonardo, and their fellows in crime, it has been attempted to set forth an unsensational description of brigandage as it exists in Sicily to-day, to state facts as they are, to demonstrate that there is not the slightest color of romance, of poetical glamour, to be found in the records of the crimes perpetrated by the brigands of a country where brigands are supposed to be popular heroes of the hour, and where all such villains are alleged "to go unwhipped of justice."

That such a state of affairs exists to-day in Sicily is to be accounted for by the fact that "Sicily is not of to-day." To appreciate and understand the present social conditions of Sicily, we must employ the moral criteria of generations

**STRAIT OF MESSINA (AT MESSINA)**





that have long since passed away from countries where brigandage does not exist.

Sicily lies under the shadow of a dark cloud. "There is no darkness but ignorance," and the ignorance of four-fifths of the Sicilians is that of mediæval times. "Is it the fault of the islanders that they are poor? Is it the fault of the peasantry that they cannot read; of the small landed proprietors that they comprehend nothing of modern obligations? In a word, can we reproach Sicily for not being civilized? What chance has she had to become civilized?" \* For ninety generations Sicily has been plundered by all comers. Barely one generation has passed away since she became free. What progress along the road of civilization did the Anglo-Saxon race make in one generation? In Doctor Johnson's time the Highlanders of Scotland were more uncivilized, more barbarous, than are to-day the inhabitants of the wild mountain valley of Sicily. Brigandage is a natural outgrowth of social conditions existing to-day in Sicily; soldiers and policemen can but repress it; the school-masters will, in time, eradicate the evil.

While we are not willing to affirm with MM. Guy de Maupassant and René Bazin that brigandage does not exist in Sicily at the present time, we nevertheless have no hesitation in stating that it is simply absurd for travellers to be deterred from visiting the wonderful island by the fear that they may be captured, carried off to the mountains, and held for ransom by Sicilian brigands. The lurking-places of these "cavalieri d'industria" are few and far between, and are not traversed by the main lines of travel; moreover, all places possessed of historical or general interest to the travelling public do not lie in what may be called "the dangerous districts," and may be visited in perfect safety at all times. We speak from personal experience.

\* LE VICOMTE COMBES DE LESTRADE. *La Sicile sous la Monarchie de Savoie.*

## C

## THE SICILIAN QUESTION

"SICILY is the Ireland of Italy." In these words Italian, German, and French writers of books on Sicily sum up their statements of the "Sicilian Question." Sicilians insist that the wrongs which accrue from the maladministration of their public affairs by the Italian government are, in their nature, "similar to the wrongs from which Ireland has suffered so many centuries under English rule." Some Italians maintain that the political and social disorders—La Mafia, brigandage, etc. —which blight the prosperity of Sicily are engendered by the same feeling of discontent which provokes the Irish to hatred of all things English; while others admit the misgovernment of the island. No doubt there are two sides to the Sicilian question, as there are two sides to the Irish question. We have not space or time to discuss the problem which is engaging the attention and taxing the thought of Italian and Sicilian statesmen, political economists, journalists, and pamphleteers; a problem which, whatever may be said of it, seems to bear the same relation to Italian politics that the Irish question, at present apparently in abeyance, has borne for so many years to the politics of Great Britain. The fact remains that just as there is an Irish question, so there is a Sicilian question.

M. le Vicomte Combes de Lestrade, in the opening chapter of his valuable book, *La Sicile sous la Monarchie de Savoie*, exclaims: "La Sicile, l'île fortunée, le paradis d'Europe, est devenue l'Irlande de l'Italie. Aucune lamentation n'équivaudrait à la tristesse de ce mot, couramment employé. Des misères de l'Irlande, des exactions qu'elle a subies, est née la question Irlandaise. La question Sicilienne est moins complexe encore, sinon plus aisée à résoudre."

"What is this everlasting Sicilian question?" asks Pasquale Villari, and, despairing of an answer to his inquiry, he adds, "The more one studies it, the more one writes about it, the more do one's ideas become clouded." True it is that for many years Sicily has been afflicted by a deep-seated and seemingly incurable social disorder, due to many causes, but primarily to the miserable condition of the commercial and laboring classes. The Sicilians themselves are not agreed as to the source of their misfortunes. They view the question from different stand-points, discuss the results of endless investigations, dissent in their opinions as to the origin of the evils, and, presenting many opposing theories concerning the value of suggested remedies, oppose facts with facts, words with words, engage in endless arguments, apparently to no practical purpose.

According to some theories the unhappy state of the plain people of Sicily, who from time to time manifest their discontent with the existing order of affairs in passionate protests, is due to a mad socialistic propaganda which has inflamed the minds of the usually peaceful contadini. According to others, socialism has nothing to do with the matter. Others assert that the unhappy state of the country is the inevitable, necessary, logical consequence of the cruel treatment of the laboring classes by the proprietors of the large estates ("proprietarijlatifondisti"). Others again, maintaining that this theory is a calumny, seek to prove that the Sicilian contadini are no worse off than the peasantry in certain districts of continental Italy, where latifondi (large estates) do not exist. Many students of the question, while admitting that the condition of the people is most deplorable, lay the blame entirely upon the Italian government, which, they allege, misgoverns Sicily, imposing oppressive taxes, while refusing to legislate in the interest of the suffering masses.

While it may be truly said that no two of the innumera-

ble publicists who have studiously investigated the Sicilian question are agreed as to the true origin of the disorders that afflict the island, it may with equal truth be said that all of them are unanimous in declaring that the "land laws" lie close to the root of the evil, if indeed they are not the prime causes of the misery and discontent—and of the lawlessness, as demonstrated in the rule of La Mafia and the prevalence of brigandage—that characterize the social condition of Sicily to-day.

Two forms of agriculture prevail in Sicily: first, "coltura intensiva"—*i. e.*, the cultivation of small farms, vineyards, and plantations of orange, lemon, almond, carruba, and sumach; secondly, "coltura estensiva"—*i. e.*, the cultivation of vast estates, pasture-lands, grain-fields. La coltura intensiva prevails around Ætna, along the sea-shore from Catania to Messina and from Messina to Palermo, a littoral region famed for its fertility. The inhabitants of this region enjoy a greater degree of prosperity than the inhabitants of the other parts of the island where la coltura estensiva prevails. Vast pasture-lands and grain-fields occupy three-quarters of the land of Sicily, and in these regions, given over to latifondi, the traveller may journey for miles without seeing a house or even a tree. The phenomenon of the Sicilian latifondi is the natural consequence and result of certain conditions of climate, soil—above all, of peculiar social conditions of a belated civilization. The soil of the latifondi is rich; lightly scraped by a rude plough, such as Virgil describes, and sparingly fertilized, it returns to the husbandman eight times the amount of the seed sown, a greater increase than is taken from the deeply ploughed, well-fertilized fields of Tuscany. But the rainfall of Sicily is inadequate, the country-side is houseless, there are few wells, the air is unhealthy, the towns are few and far between, there are not many roads, and these are bad, and owing to the disordered state of society, there is little public

security of persons or property. The inevitable result of this condition of affairs is that small proprietors are not able to cultivate small holdings profitably; therefore, and for many other reasons, they make way for the great proprietors, who monopolize the land to the detriment of society at large.

The Sicilian *latifondi* are to a great extent held by the descendants of the feudal barons, or by wealthy capitalists, who, while drawing the revenues from them, rarely visit their estates, preferring to intrust the management to *gabellotti*. These middle-men, relieving the proprietors of all care and responsibility, provide the capital to work the lands, pay the taxes, and return to the lords of the land a certain fixed rental at stated periods. The disadvantages of this system are apparent. The *gabellotto*, who rents the land for a short period, is interested only in getting as large and immediate a return as possible, and rarely improves the property. Therefore, from year to year there is a noticeable degeneration in the fertility of the lands and in the condition of the betterments. In many cases the *gabellotto*, imitating the proprietor, sublets the estate to a *su-gabellotto*, who divides the estate into small parcels, which he in turn sublets to *borgesi* (small farmers). In the social scale the *borgesi* are but a grade higher than the *giornalieri* (day-laborers). The *su-gabellotti*, in subletting to the *borgesi*, usually make one or two forms of contracts, respectively known as "*terrageria*" and "*metateria*." According to the first the *borgese* agrees to give to the *su-gabellotto* three, four, or five "*salme*" of grain for each "*salma*" of land. If the *su-gabellotto* does the ploughing and sowing at his own cost, he receives more grain for each acre cultivated, and this amount of grain the *borgese* has to pay at the threshing floor, be the season good or bad. According to the contract known as *metateria*, the *borgese* is bound to pay to the *su-gabellotto* two-thirds of the crop, or, very

frequently, two-thirds of the crop plus the seed which has been advanced by the su-gabellotto. These are the two forms of "contratti colonici" (farming contracts) that prevail in Sicily. Certain other deductions are made from the small share of the crop set aside for the borgese; for instance, he has to pay "il dritto di messa," a measure of corn to the priest who visits the fields to say mass and bless the harvests; "il dritto sfrido," that is, the waste of seed; "il dritto di cuccia," the macaroni given to the campieri who guard the crops from robbers. Many other extortions ("angherie") are said to be practised by the middlemen whereby the borgesì are wronged and stripped of what little profit they may have hoped to gain when they contracted with the su-gabellotti to till the land on shares. Is it any wonder that as the borgese is treated by his superior, the su-gabellotto, in like manner does the latter treat his inferiors, the giornalieri, who work for him? It is also readily to be understood that when a large proprietor has taken his rental from the gabellotto, and the gabellotto has exacted his dues from the su-gabellotto, and the latter has claimed his rights from the borgese, little remains for the miserable devil who does the work in the fields. Surely the day-laborer is the victim of a vicious system of land laws, in the making of which he has no voice, and which he is powerless to mend or end.

Is it any wonder that such a system of land tenure breeds usury in all its most objectionable forms? Sicily swarms with usuriaj (usurers) who, taking advantage of the necessities of giornalieri and borgesì, lend their money never at less than twenty, generally at thirty-three and one-third per cent., very frequently at fifty per cent., and not infrequently at more exorbitant rates of interest.

"Usury is the undying worm ever gnawing at the heart of the poor in a society founded upon land laws that make the latifondi not only possible, but inevitable." More than

any other class, the borgesì find themselves in thralldom to the usurer. At the end of the harvest season, after he has paid "la semenza," "i terragri," "i terraggiulo," "le anghe-rie," "i soccorso," etc., in addition to the rent exacted by his over-lords, they have yet to settle with the usurer. That done, the luckless wights return to their miserable homes after months of hard labor with empty hands, thankful, indeed, if they have not to leave their ploughs and their oxen as security for small sums loaned to them by the same usurers to enable them to eke out existence until harvest-time comes round again.

The facts stated above sufficiently account for the hatred of the borgesì and laboring classes for the galantuomini (the proprietors), and, above all, for the usurers—that is to say, capitalists, great and small. As these same capitalists are able to control—and do control—municipal politics, and to a great degree have hitherto controlled the politics of the island, filling all offices with their appointees, the hatred of the lower classes for the "classi dirigenti" (governing classes) is also readily to be imagined.

This "odio di classi" (hatred of the masses for the classes, the poor for the rich) is asserted by Sonino, Franchetti, Bonfadini, Damiani, Colajanni—in fact, by every economist who has made a study of the Sicilian question. Since the great proprietors sublet their lands to middle-men, and rarely, if ever, visit their estates, preferring to live in Messina or Palermo, and even as far away as Rome, Madrid, London, the contadini never see, and therefore do not know, the "padroni dei fondi" (the lords of the land), and, resenting the oppression and exactions to which they are subjected by the agents of the proprietor, his bailiffs, stewards, factors, and the whole host of his hangers on and under-strappers, they learn to hate the absent landlord, believing him to be the author of all their miseries.

One of the ablest of Sicilian statesmen asserts that Sicily

is constantly in a condition of latent revolution, and prophecies: "Either the government will have courage to reform radically all that has been for so many years demanding reformation or the people will completely overturn and demolish all social and political landmarks."

Fortunately for Sicily, there is now a government at Rome which has addressed itself resolutely to the solution of the Sicilian question. Already great progress has been made, certainly, in pacifying the island, a certain measure of "home rule" has been granted to the Sicilians, and we venture the prediction that if the King's Government perseveres in its determination to deal with the Sicilians in the spirit of justice which it has hitherto exhibited, and is not mischievously and unreasonably opposed by political agitators, it will be instrumental in raising Sicily from her fallen condition, and in leading the Sicilians to the beginnings of the paths of peace and prosperity.

NOTE.—I have not presumed to express any opinion of my own on the "Sicilian Question," to the discussion of which so much earnest attention has been given by the ablest publicists of Sicily and Italy. I have merely endeavored to present, in as few words as possible, a full and fair summary of the long-continued and exhaustive debate to which that subject has given rise. I now, however, assert without fear of contradiction that Sicilian history of the past seven years, since I visited the island to gather the material for this book, demonstrates that "the evil prophecies of impending woe," indulged in by the most patriotic Sicilians, remain unfulfilled. In 1895 I found the Sicilians of all classes and orders of society suffering, either directly or indirectly, from the effects of an acute financial panic and the resulting stagnation of trade and commerce in all parts of the island; and these real evils and not imaginary evils—hunger, not socialism—had bred alarming social and political disorders. The island was under martial law, and the state of private and public affairs seemed to warrant the most hopeless and despairing forecasts of the future. Times have changed and the condition of Sicily has changed with them. While it cannot be said that to-day the Sicilians are prosperous, in the American meaning of



(11)

the word, it is true that better days have dawned, and that a more encouraging and hopeful state of things exists throughout the island. Sicily is at peace, the laboring masses no longer feel the pangs of hunger, employment of some kind is to be found by all, or nearly all, men and women who are willing to work, and wages have increased slightly above "starvation rates." Altogether the signs of the times are favorable, and it would appear as if, at last, Sicily was entering upon a new, a happier, and a more hopeful national life.

THE END.





